

**THE SECOND CHAPTER  
OF THE  
*PRAMANAVARTTIKA***

**Handout for the Spring 2015 Term<sup>1</sup>  
Advanced Buddhist Philosophy Course in English**

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**2nd  
TERM**

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## Technical Notes

### Formatting of Sanskrit & Tibetan Names & Terminology

Sanskrit terms and titles, that are not proper names, are initially presented in bold italics. Sanskrit diacritics are not used in this text.

Tibetan words are rendered in the English alphabet according to the Wylie system. When both a Sanskrit term and its Tibetan translation are shown in parentheses, the Tibetan always follows the Sanskrit.

Tibetan proper names that appear in the body of the text (not in parenthesis) are rendered in simple phonetics, rather than in Wylie. Those proper names include: Gyaltsab Darma Rinchen (Gyaltsab Je), Yeshe Thabgyal, Geshe Palden Drakpa, Geshe Wangchen, Geshe Gyatso, Geshe Tsering Norbu.

### Significance of the fonts and formatting used in the translation of the Second Chapter of the *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* by Gyaltsab Je

TEXT SOURCE	LOCATION ON PAGES OF HANDOUT	FONT
Gyaltsab Je's commentary	at the left margin	Bookman Old Style 11pt.
Gyaltsab Je's headings of the OUTLINES of the <i>Pramanavarttika</i>	at the left margin	<b>Bookman Old Style 13pt.</b>
Indian or Tibetan sources, e.g., Dharmakirti's <i>Pramanavarttika</i>	indented	<i>Bookman Old Style 11pt. italics</i>
*Explanatory comments by contemporary masters	indented	Cambria 11pt.

\* Explanations and clarifications of difficult points by contemporary masters have been translated and summarized by Ven. Kelsang Wangmo and appended to Gyaltsab Je's text.

Since different terms are used to translate the Sanskrit word *pramana* (*tshad ma*), for the sake of consistency Ven. Kelsang Wangmo has used the Sanskrit term in translating the text of Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika*, instead of an English equivalent. However, in translating Gyaltsab Je's *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* and the explanatory comments by contemporary masters, *pramana* is only employed in a few instances. More frequently, an appropriate English term is used. With few exceptions, the English term used is "valid cognizer".

## Introduction

The following handout for the IBD Buddhist philosophy course on the second chapter of Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika* contains translations of two texts:

1. The second chapter of Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika* (*tshad ma rnam 'grel; Commentary on [Dignaga's Compendium of] Pramana*)
2. The second chapter of Gyaltsab Je's commentary on the *Pramanavarttika*, called *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation, a Detailed Explanation of the Verse Lines of the Pramanavarttika* (*tshad ma rnam 'grel gyi tshig le'ur byes pa rnam bshad thar lam gsal byed*) — usually referred to as *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* (*thar lam gsal byed*)

Gyaltsab Je's *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* is interspersed with the *Pramanavarttika*, for the commentary provides detailed expositions on the meaning of the verses of the root text.

Furthermore, since both texts are difficult to comprehend on their own, they are also interspersed with additional explanations by contemporary masters such as Ven. Geshe Yeshe Thabgyal, Ven. Geshe Palden Drakpa, Ven. Geshe Wangchen, Ven. Geshe Gyatso, Ven. Geshe Tsering Norbu, and others.

As the name of the text implies, Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika* is a commentary on Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana* (*Pramana-samuccaya; tshad ma kun btus*). The six chapters of Dignaga's *Compendium* are written in verse and constitute one of the most important works on *pramana*.

Here, the Sanskrit term *pramana* translates as “logic” or “epistemology”, for it refers to the main topic of Dignaga and Dharmakirti's texts. However, when explaining Buddhist philosophical concepts, *pramana* is usually translated as “valid cognizer”. In some contexts it can also be translated as “authority”, “authoritative”, “authentic”, “proof”, “proven”, and so forth.

## Dignaga

Dignaga (ca. 450-540 CE) was a proponent of the Chittamatra Following Reasoning philosophical school. He was one of Vasubandhu's four great disciples, each of whom surpassed their teacher in a particular field of Buddhist study. Dignaga was more learned than Vasubandhu in *Pramana*<sup>2</sup>.

Dignaga was born into a Brahmin family in Simhavaktra, near Kanchi in South India. At a young age, he became very proficient in the sacred Brahmin scriptures and the worldly sciences. However, he eventually lost interest in the spiritual system of the Brahmins, developed renunciation for the suffering nature of cyclic existence, and took ordination from a Buddhist teacher called Nagadatta (*glang po byin*) of the Vatsiputriya system, a sub-school of the Buddhist Vaibhashika School. Nagadatta named him Dignaga (*phyogs kyi glang po*) and gave him extensive teachings on the three baskets according to the Vatsiputriya system.

Followers of the Vatsiputriya system assert a type of self that is inexpressible as something substantially or imputedly existent, or as being the same or different from the five aggregates. Dignaga was instructed by his teacher to meditate on the inexpressible self. In an attempt to find and comprehend the inexpressible self, Dignaga is said to have kindled fires in the four directions, stripped off his clothes, and meditated day and night. When he reported back to his teacher that he was unable to find such a self, his teacher took this as an indirect criticism and sent him to study elsewhere.

Dignaga went to stay at Nalanda Monastery where he became a disciple of Vasubandhu. He studied and mastered the entire body of sutras and treatises of the Hinayana and Mahayana, and became a great tantric practitioner, receiving instructions from Manjushri himself. He also developed great skills in debate and on numerous occasions defended the monastery against learned non-Buddhist scholars who challenged the monks in debate. Dignaga became particularly renowned for having defeated the great

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<sup>2</sup> The other three disciples were (1) Shtiramati who was more learned than Vasubandhu in *Abhidharma*, (2) Gunaprabha who was more learned in the *Vinaya*, and (3) Arya Vimuktisena who was more learned in the *Prajnaparamita*.

Brahmin scholar, Sudurjaya, who — as a result of losing the debate — converted to Buddhism together with his disciples.

At the time, it was customary for a scholar who lost a debate to adopt, along with his disciples, the spiritual system of the victor.

Dignaga eventually left Nalanda in order to lead a contemplative life in the forests of Orissa. There he resolved to compose what became his most famous work, the **Compendium of Pramana**, as a compilation of his many previous writings on *Pramana*, which, according to his own description, were fragmentary works. It is said that he wrote the first verse of the **Compendium**, comprising the homage and promise to compose the text, on a rock at his cave hermitage:

*To the one who has become a valid cognizer, to that which wishes to benefit migrators,  
To “the teacher”, “the sugata”, “the protector”, I bow down.*

*In order to establish valid cognizers, I will herewith create a single compendium of my  
various fragmentary writings.*

When he wrote those words many auspicious signs occurred, such as light blazing forth, the earth trembling, loud thunder rolling in the sky, and so forth. A Brahmin ascetic called Krishnamuni observed these signs and through his clairvoyance understood that they were the results of Dignaga’s writing. Driven by envy, he went to Dignaga’s cave while the latter was away on alms-rounds and erased the words. When Dignaga returned, he wrote the verse again, and again Krishnamuni came to erase it. The third time Dignaga left an additional note that read, “Please do not erase this verse just for fun because with this verse I am pursuing a great aim. Also, there is no point in erasing it out of envy since it is in my mind from where it cannot be removed. But if you disagree with these words, you should show yourself, and we will debate.” When the auspicious signs occurred a third time, Krishnamuni went again to Dignaga’s cave. But upon reading the note he refrained from erasing the verse and waited for Dignaga’s return. The two debated and Krishnamuni was defeated three times. When Dignaga asked him to adopt the Buddha Dharma as a result of his defeat, the Brahmin ascetic grew furious and emanated magical flames that burned Dignaga’s clothes and possessions.

Distraught and discouraged by the Brahmin’s reaction, Dignaga felt that if he could not help the highly intelligent Brahmin, how could he be of benefit to all sentient beings by composing the **Compendium of Pramana**? He threw the chalk with which he had written the verse up in the air, thinking, “As soon as the chalk touches the ground, I will give up my aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings and instead strive to become self-liberated”. But the chalk did not fall back to the ground and when he looked up, he saw Manjushri in the sky, holding the chalk. Manjushri asked Dignaga not to give up his mind of enlightenment, and promised to protect him until he attained the state of a Buddha. He also asked him to compose the **Compendium** and prophesied that in the future this commentary would become an eye for migrating beings.

Encouraged by these words, Dignaga composed the **Compendium of Pramana**, which has continued to be the subject of study, contemplation and meditation, along with Dharmakirti’s **Pramanavarttika**, for over a millennium; at first widely in India and then in Tibet, Mongolia and the Himalayan regions.

After completing the text, Dignaga travelled around South India and greatly furthered the spread of Buddhism. One of his main disciples was Ishvarasena (*dbang phyung sde*) who composed a commentary on the **Compendium of Pramana** and later became one of Dharmakirti’s teachers.

## Dharmakirti

Dharmakirti (ca. 600-660 CE) was also a follower of the Chittamatra School Following Reasoning. He was born to a Brahmin family in Tirumalai in the kingdom of Chudamani of Tamil Nadu. Until the age of eighteen he trained in the Brahminical tradition, and he became very well-versed in non-Buddhist philosophy. Then, upon reading a Buddhist text, he developed faith in the Buddha Dharma and started to dress in the style of a Buddhist layperson. This angered the Brahmins and he was expelled from his community.

Dharmakirti went to Nalanda monastery where he received ordination and extensive teachings from Dharmapala (*chos skyong*). Then he requested Ishvarasena, who was a direct disciple of Dignaga, to

teach him the **Compendium of Pramana**. Ishvarasena taught him the text three times. After the first time, Dharmakirti's understanding of the **Compendium** had become equal to that of Ishvarasena; after the second time, it had become equal to Dignaga's; and after the third time Dharmakirti was able to recognize that some of Ishvarasena's assertions were not in accordance with Dignaga's views. After Dharmakirti revealed those mistaken assertions to Ishvarasena, the latter was delighted by his student's intelligence and granted him permission to compose a commentary on the **Compendium of Pramana** in order to refute those assertions.

Dharmakirti was also initiated into the Buddhist tantras, became a highly accomplished practitioner, and had a direct vision of Heruka.

In order to deepen his understanding of non-Buddhist philosophy, Dharmakirti then went to work as the servant of a renowned non-Buddhist scholar and his family for several years. Pretending not to be a Buddhist, Dharmakirti learned all the secret points of the scholar's philosophical system. Later by challenging and defeating the renowned scholar in debate, Dharmakirti converted him and his disciples to Buddhism.

Thereafter, Dharmakirti travelled across India converting many people to Buddhism. Eventually he arrived at the gates of the residence of King Utpullapusa, who had heard of Dharmakirti's great fame and invited him to stay in his kingdom. Dharmakirti accepted and while staying there composed the *Seven Treatises on Pramana* (*tshad ma sde bdun*) — one of which is the **Pramanavarttika** — as well as an auto-commentary on the first chapter of the **Pramanavarttika**. However, most contemporary scholars were unable to grasp the meaning of the treatises. Those few who understood their meaning, moved by envy, claimed that they were incorrect and tied them with string to the tail of a dog. Dharmakirti responded that the dog, by running through different villages and cities, would in that manner spread the treatises. He also added a verse to the beginning of the **Pramanavarttika** (after the verse of homage and the promise to compose the text) that reads:

*Most living beings are attached to the mundane and not endowed with the  
dexterity of wisdom.  
Not only are they not interested in excellent teachings, they are hateful owing  
to the defilement of envy.  
This is why the thought that this [treatise] will be beneficial to others does not  
occur.  
But having familiarized [my] mind with excellent teachings, I am happy [to  
compose the treatise] for the sake of generating great striving.*

Sometime later Dharmakirti taught the **Pramanavarttika** to two of his main disciples, Devendrabodhi (*lha dbang blo*) and Shakyabodhi (*sha'kya blo*). Afterwards, he asked Devendrabodhi to compose a commentary on the text. However, displeased with the first draft Dharmakirti washed it away with water; displeased with the second draft he burned it. He finally accepted the third draft but criticized it, remarking that although the explicit meaning of the text was conveyed, the deeper implicit meaning was not.

Thinking that no one would be able to properly comprehend his text, Dharmakirti added the following line to the end of the **Pramanavarttika**:

*Just as a river into the ocean, [the meaning of this treatise] will dissolve into  
my body and disappear.*

Towards the end of his life, Dharmakirti founded a school and a temple at Kalinga where he passed away.

Both Dignaga and Dharmakirti strongly affected the course of both Buddhist philosophy and Indian philosophy in general. Their expositions on language, negation, direct perception, etc., were highly influential among both Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophers, but their greatest impact derived from their analysis of inferential reasoning.

Dignaga and Dharmakirti are often described as Buddhist logicians, for they formulated a system of logic and epistemology that was based on a new form of deductive reasoning. Yet this does not mean that they were chiefly interested in the formal properties of reasoning. Instead, they regarded logic as a

useful tool that enables Buddhist practitioners to eliminate their misperceptions, replace them with correct apprehensions of reality and eventually attain liberation and Buddhahood.

The debate format that is still very popular among Tibetan Buddhist students of debate is based largely on Dignaga and Dharmakirti's works. Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika*, in particular, provides Tibetan Buddhist philosophers with a standard vocabulary that is used as a framework for analysis of the various Buddhist scriptures. It also represents the epistemological foundation of the curriculum in many Tibetan monastic institutions.

## Gyaltsab Je

Gyaltsab Darma Rinchen (1364–1432) was born in Tsang province of central Tibet. He was ordained as a monk at the age of ten and given the name Darma Rinchen (*dar ma rin chen*). Gyaltsab Je studied at a Sakya Monastery, the Kadam monastery of Sangpu (*gsang phu*) and the Kagyu monastery of Tsetang (*rtse thang*), which later converted to the Gelug tradition. Like Lama Tsongkhapa, he was also a student of the renowned Sakya Master Rendawa Zhoenu Lodroe (*red mda' ba gzhon nu blo gros*).

After extensive study of the *Prajnaparamita*, *Pramana*, *Vinaya*, and so forth, Gyaltsab Je became an accomplished and eloquent scholar of the Sakya tradition, famed for his intellect and knowledge. While visiting different monasteries in Central Tibet, he met Lama Tsongkhapa. He had heard of Lama Tsongkhapa's fame and went to attend one of Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings at Nyaeltoe Radrong (*gnyal stod ra grong*) Monastery. As Gyaltsab Je listened to Lama Tsongkhapa, he was astounded by the clarity and profundity of his teaching, and generated great faith. From that time on, Gyaltsab Je was completely devoted to Lama Tsongkhapa and became one of his main disciples. He received extensive teachings from Lama Tsongkhapa and took copious notes. Being a prolific writer he composed numerous commentaries (such as the *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation*). He also supervised the construction of Ganden Monastery.

Before Lama Tsongkhapa passed away, he appointed Gyaltsab Je as the first throne holder of the Ganden (or Gelug) tradition.

## Seven Treatises on Pramana

As mentioned above, Dharmakirti composed seven commentaries on the *Compendium of Pramana*, referred to as the *Seven Treatises on Pramana* (*tshad ma sde bdun*). These seven texts can be categorized into:

- i. Three treatises that are like a body, and
- ii. Four treatises that are like branches.

The three treatises that are like a body are:

- a) *Pramanavarttika* (*tshad ma rnam 'grel; Commentary on [Dignaga's Compendium of] Pramana*);
- b) *Pramanaviniscaya* (*tshad ma rnam nges; Ascertainment of Pramana*);
- c) *Nyayabindu* (*rigs thigs; Drops of Reasoning*).

The four treatises that are like branches are:

- a) *Hetubindu* (*gtan tshigs thig pa; Drops of Logic*);
- b) *Sambandhapariksha* (*'brel ba brtag pa; Investigating Relations*);
- c) *Samtanantarasiddhi* (*rgyud gzhon grub pa; Proof of Other [Mental] Continuums*);
- d) *Vadanyaya* (*rtsod pa'i rigs pa; Reasoning of Debate*).

The three *treatises that are like a body* are general elaborations on the *Compendium of Pramana* on logic and epistemology. The first is the most extensive, the second is slightly shorter, and the third is the shortest. These three are *treatises that are like a body* because they each teach the eight 'pivotal points of logic' (*rtog ge'i tshig don rgyad*).

The eight 'pivotal points of logic' are:

1. Correct inferential cognizers (*rjes dpag yang dag*);
2. False inferential cognizers (*rjes dpag ltar snang*);
3. Correct direct perceivers (*mngon sum yang dag*);
4. False direct perceivers (*mngon sum ltar snang*);
5. Correct proof statements (*sgrub ngag yang dag*);
6. False proof statements (*sgrub ngag ltar snang*);
7. Correct refutations (*sun 'byin yang dag*);
8. False refutations (*sun 'byin ltar snang*).

Each of the three texts teaches the eight 'pivotal points of logic' by *primarily* teaching the four correct pivotal points, while teaching the four false pivotal points in an *ancillary* fashion.

The last four texts are *treatises that are like branches* because they do not teach all eight 'pivotal points of logic' but only some of them, and because they are just supplements to the first, third, or fourth chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*. The *Hetubindu* (on correct reasons) and *Sambandhapariksha* (on the relationship between correct reasons and predicates) are supplements to the first chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*, while the *Samtanantarasisiddhi* (on the issue of other minds) is a supplement to the third and the *Vadanyaya* (on debate techniques, etc.) is a supplement to the fourth chapter.

## Eight Pivotal Points of Logic

Among the four 'correct pivotal points of logic', (1) correct inferential cognizers and (3) correct direct perceivers are considered to be the tools that facilitate our own understanding. They function mainly for our own benefit for they enable us to accomplish our personal short and long-term goals by replacing harmful misperceptions with well-founded recognition of reality.

(1) *Correct inferential cognizers* and inferential cognizers are equivalent. Inferential cognizers are conceptual consciousnesses that realize their main objects in dependence on correct reasons. These types of consciousness are essential for Buddhist practice because they facilitate the realization of essential concepts, such as the suffering nature of cyclic existence, impermanence, selflessness, etc., which need to be apprehended in order to gradually eliminate the numerous misperceptions that are responsible for our problems and difficulties. However, most of these essential concepts are slightly hidden phenomena and cannot be perceived initially without relying on logical reasoning. Logical reasoning, in turn, relies on logically correct syllogisms. An example of such a syllogism is:

*Regarding the subject, the physical body, it is impermanent, because it is a product of its own causes and conditions. For instance, like the last moment of a candle flame.*

A correct syllogism has four parts: a (i) subject, (ii) predicate, (iii) correct reason and (iv) example. In the case of the syllogism cited above, "physical body" is the subject, "impermanent" the predicate, "being a product of its own causes and conditions" the correct reason, and "the last moment of the candle flame" the example. Also, the composite of the two, the subject (physical body) and the predicate (impermanent), constitutes the *object that is to be established* (*bsgrub bya*), also called the *probandum*. Hence, "the physical body is impermanent" is the above syllogism's *object that is to be established* (i.e., it is that which is realized by the inferential cognizer which arises in dependence on the syllogism).

Furthermore, for a syllogism to be logically correct, its reason must have three qualities. These three qualities are called the 'three modes of the reason':

- a. The property of the subject
- b. The forward pervasion
- c. The counter pervasion

The reason of the above-cite syllogism possesses the first mode of the reason, the **property of the subject**, because the reason (*being a product of its own causes and conditions*) is the property (or characteristic) of the subject (*the physical body*). The reason is the property of the subject because the *physical body is a product of its own causes and conditions*.

The reason of the syllogism possesses the second mode of the reason, the **forward pervasion**, because — to put it simply — '*whatever is a product of its own causes and conditions is necessarily impermanent*'.



In the same way, it possesses the third mode of the reason, the **counter-pervasion**, because 'whatever is not impermanent is necessarily not a product of its own causes and conditions'.

After having realized the different parts and qualities of the syllogism — *e.g.*, that *the physical body is a product of its own causes and conditions*, that *whatever is a product of its own causes and conditions is necessarily impermanent*, and so forth — a practitioner eventually generates an inferential cognizer realizing the *object that is to be established* (the *probandum*), *i.e.*, realizing that the physical body is impermanent. Since such realization arises in dependence on a correct reason (being a product of its own causes and conditions), inferential cognizers are described as conceptual consciousnesses that realize their main objects (*e.g.*, that the physical body is impermanent) in dependence on correct reasons.

(3) *Correct* direct perceivers and direct perceivers are also equivalent. Direct perceivers refer to correct sense or mental consciousnesses that perceive their main object directly without relying on a generic image. Examples of direct perceivers are sense direct perceivers, such as an eye consciousness apprehending a table, an ear consciousness apprehending a song, a nose consciousness apprehending the smell of perfume, and so forth. These sense consciousnesses realize phenomena that are obvious or manifest (*i.e.*, not hidden), such as shapes, colors, sounds, etc. Other examples of direct perceiver are self-knowers (explained below), clairvoyant awarenesses and yogic direct perceivers. Yogic direct perceivers are mental direct perceivers that directly realize their main objects (*e.g.*, impermanence, selflessness, etc.) in dependence on prolonged and extensive meditation.

Direct perceivers are essential to Buddhist practice. Although hidden phenomena are realized for the first time by inferential cognizers, such a realization is not sufficient for practitioners aspiring to transform their mind and attain liberation or Buddhahood. Such a realization is not sufficient because inferential cognizers are conceptual consciousnesses that do not realize their objects directly but through a generic image.

For instance, an inferential cognizer realizing selflessness does not realize selflessness directly but through the generic image of selflessness. Hence, a practitioner who has cultivated an inferential cognizer realizing selflessness continues to familiarize with the conceptual consciousness realizing selflessness until, after prolonged and intense meditation, that consciousness transforms into a yogic direct perceiver realizing selflessness, which is strong enough to serve as an effective antidote to the misperception of the self and to other afflictions.

Ordinary direct perceivers, such as sense direct perceivers, are also significant in Buddhist practice for they enable practitioners to listen to teachings, read the scriptures, etc. They also facilitate inferential cognition of a hidden phenomenon. For instance, a practitioner who generated the inferential cognizer realizing that the physical body is impermanent in dependence on the above syllogism (*Regarding the subject, the physical body, it is impermanent, because it is the product of its own causes and conditions*) must have realized, prior to generating such an inferential cognizer, that *the physical body is the product of its own causes and conditions*. But unlike the *physical body being impermanent*, the *physical body being a product of its own causes and conditions* is not a hidden phenomenon, for it can be realized for the first time by an eye consciousness.

(5) Correct proof statements and (7) correct refutations are considered to be the tools that facilitate others' understanding, which is why they are mainly for the benefit of others. After having attained realizations ourselves by means of inferential cognizers and direct perceivers, we need to assist others in attaining the same realizations by refuting their wrong views with correct refutations, and by generating realizations in their mental continuums through proof statements.

(5) Correct proof statements are verbal statements that express a correct syllogism. An example of a proof statement is, "Whatever is a product of its own causes and conditions is necessarily impermanent. For instance, like the last moment of a candle flame. Likewise, the physical body is also a product of its own causes and conditions." Here these words state that just as the last moment of a candle flame is impermanent because it is a product of its own causes and conditions, likewise the physical body is impermanent because it is a product of its own causes and conditions.

Therefore, the words of the proof statement express the following syllogism:

*Regarding the subject, the physical body, it is impermanent, because it is a product of its own causes and conditions. For instance, like the last moment of a candle flame.*

In dependence on hearing that proof statement, a person who has not yet realized that the physical body is impermanent is able to cultivate an inferential cognizer realizing that the physical body is impermanent.

(7) Correct refutations refer to correct consequences. Like a syllogism, a consequence is a form of logical statement, which one cites to help another person first to recognize and then to let go of a wrong view. A consequence is stated in such a way as to reveal the absurdity of that person's wrong view; it turns his own assertions against him, so that he is unable to give a correct response without contradicting what he asserted.

For instance, to a person who holds that (a) the physical body is permanent, that (b) the physical body is a product of its own causes and conditions, and that (c) whatever is a product of its own causes and conditions is necessarily impermanent, the following consequence is cited:

*Regarding the subject, the physical body, it follows that it is not a product of its own causes and condition because it is permanent.*

In this case, the person accepts that *the physical body is permanent*, which is why he cannot claim that the **reason is not established** (i.e., he cannot claim that it is not correct that the physical body is permanent).

Since he accepts the forward and counter-pervasions (i.e., that whatever is *permanent* is necessarily not a product of its own causes and conditions, and whatever is a product of its own causes and conditions is necessarily not permanent), he cannot claim that there is **no pervasion**. Lastly he cannot even accept that the physical body is not a product of its own causes and conditions, for that would contradict his assertion that *the physical body is a product of its own causes and conditions*. He is thus left speechless.

The person comes to realize that his views are contradictory, which enables him to reassess his beliefs until he either thinks that the physical body is probably impermanent or is convinced that it is. At that point one cites a proof statement expressing a syllogism that establishes that the physical body is impermanent.

As mentioned above, in dependence on that syllogism the person is able to eventually generate an inferential cognizer *realizing* that the physical body is impermanent.

Regarding the four 'false pivotal points of logic', (2) false inferential cognizers refer to conceptual consciousnesses that are not actual inferential cognizers because they do not realize their objects. An example of a false inferential cognizer is a correctly assuming consciousness, perceiving that the physical body is impermanent, which did not arise in dependence on a syllogism. Another example is a correctly assuming consciousness, perceiving that the physical body is impermanent, which arose in dependence on a wrong syllogism. A wrong syllogism is a logically incorrect syllogism and therefore does not lead to an inferential cognizer realizing the syllogism's *object that is to be established* (the *probandum*). For instance, the following syllogism: *Regarding the subject, the physical body, it is impermanent, because it exists*, is a wrong syllogism since there is 'no pervasion'. There is 'no pervasion' because whatever exists is not necessarily impermanent. Whatever exists is not necessarily impermanent because there are phenomena that are permanent.

Another example of a wrong syllogism is: *Regarding the subject, the physical body, it is permanent because it is unchangeable*. This is a wrong syllogism because the reason is not an attribute of the subject, i.e., the physical body is not unchangeable. Such a wrong syllogism may give rise to a wrong conceptual consciousness perceiving the physical body to be permanent, which is also a false inferential cognizer.

(4) False direct perceivers refer to conceptual consciousnesses or wrong non-conceptual awarenesses. Since false direct perceivers are either conceptual or wrong consciousnesses they are not actual direct perceivers. Examples include a conceptual consciousness realizing selflessness, an eye consciousness perceiving a blue snow mountain, and a memory consciousness remembering a table.

(6) False proof statements are statements that express a wrong syllogism. This means that wrong proof statements express a logically incorrect syllogism in dependence on which one cannot generate an inferential cognizer realizing the syllogism's *object that is to be established* (the *probandum*). An example of a false proof statement is: "Whatever is unchangeable is necessarily permanent. For instance, like the absence of an elephant on the table. The physical body is also unchangeable." This statement is a false proof statement because it expresses the following wrong syllogism: *Regarding the subject, the physical body, it is permanent because it is unchangeable. For instance, like the absence of an elephant on the table.*

(8) Wrong consequences are consequences that do not reveal the absurdities of a person's wrong view, so that the person is unable to become aware of his contradictory assertions.

An example of a wrong consequence is: "*Regarding the subject, the physical body, it follows that it is not a product of its own causes and conditions because it is permanent*" addressed to a person who holds that the physical body is (a) permanent and (b) a product of its own causes and conditions, but does not hold that (c) whatever is a product of its own causes and conditions is necessarily impermanent.

It is important to identify and understand these *false pivotal points of logic*, for practitioners may confuse them with their correct counterparts.

## Pramanavarttika

Among the *Seven Treatises of Pramana*, the most popular one is the *Pramanavarttika*, which has been more widely studied than Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana* in Tibet, Mongolia and the Himalaya region.

The *Pramanavarttika* is written in verse and has four chapters:

1. The chapter on inference for one's own benefit (*Svarthanumana*; *rang don rjes dpag gi le'u*);
2. The chapter on the establishment of a valid cognition (*Pramanasiddhi*; *tshad ma grub pa'i le'u*);
3. The chapter on direct perception (*Pratyaksha*; *mngon sum le'u*);
4. The chapter on inference for others' benefit (*Prarthanumana*; *gzhan don rjes dpag gi le'u*).

### Chapter on Inference for One's Own Benefit

Unlike the last three chapters of the *Pramanavarttika*, the first does not actually elaborate on any of the verses or chapters of Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana*, but serves as an introduction to the text. It sets forth inferential cognizers (both the correct and false inferential cognizers, two of the eight *correct pivotal points of logic*) because, as Dharmakirti explains in his auto-commentary on the first chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*:

*Thorough discernment of that which is factual and that which is not depends on inferential cognizers.*

Therefore, study and contemplation of the first chapter aids practitioners to cultivate inferential cognizers in their mental continuum, which in turn facilitates their comprehension of the last three chapters.

However, instead of explaining the inferential cognizers themselves, the first chapter expounds on that which mainly gives rise to inferential cognizers, *i.e.*, correct syllogisms, and presents their general structure, categories, definitions, and so forth.

### Chapter on Establishment of Valid Cognition

The second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* is the most important one. It comments only on the first two lines of Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana*, which constitute the homage to Buddha Shakyamuni. Elaborating on the two lines of homage, the second chapter presents liberation, Buddhahood, and the

paths that lead to these two states. Dharmakirti presents liberation, Buddhahood, and the paths that lead there by way of establishing that the Buddha is a ‘valid cognizer’. However, this does not mean that the Buddha is literally a valid cognizer, because valid cognizers are consciousnesses while the Buddha is not a consciousness but a person. Instead, it means that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*. The Buddha is called a *valid cognizer being* because, through his own power (without depending on another teacher), he unerringly and effortlessly teaches those seeking release whatever they need to know to reach their goal.

As part of establishing that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*, the second chapter also sets forth past and future lives, the four noble truths, and so forth.

Some scholars explain that the reason why Dharmakirti composed the second chapter is that at the time, numerous critics expressed their disapproval of Dignaga’s works on *Pramana*. As mentioned above, in a Buddhist context, *Pramana* is usually translated as “valid cognizer”. Valid cognizers are awarenesses that are newly non-deceptive, *i.e.*, that newly realize their main objects. There are two types of valid cognizers: (a) direct valid cognizers (*i.e.*, valid cognizers that are direct perceivers) and (b) inferential valid cognizers (*i.e.*, valid cognizers that are inferential cognizers).

One of the main objectives of the *Pramana* literature is to teach practitioners the means of cultivating correct apprehension of the essential concepts of the Buddha Dharma. Such apprehension depends primarily on realizing phenomena which are currently hidden to us that we can realize initially only with inferential cognizers. Inferential cognizers in turn depend on correct syllogisms and thus on logical reasoning. Since the *Pramana* literature elucidates such logical reasoning and the way to utilize it as a tool to comprehend impermanence, selflessness, and so forth, commentaries on *Pramana* are usually referred to as commentaries on “logic” or “epistemology”, and the study of *Pramana* is referred to as the study of “logic” or “epistemology”.

Many Indian scholars were unable to recognize the value of Dignaga’s work. Some claimed that teachings on *Pramana* (*i.e.*, logic or epistemology) were not based on the teachings of the Buddha. Others alleged that the main purpose of the *Pramana* literature was to defeat an opponent in debate and that it was of no use to those aspiring to attain liberation or Buddhahood.

Therefore, Dharmakirti taught the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* to counteract these assertions by demonstrating the significance of the *Pramana* literature with respect to studying, contemplating and meditating on past and future lives, the four noble truths, liberation, Buddhahood, and so forth.

Please note that even though in general, the *Pramanavarttika* is based on the point of view of the Chittamatra School Following Reasoning, the second chapter is written from the perspective of the Sautrantika School.

### ***Chapter on Direct Perception & Chapter on Inference for Others’ Benefit***

The last two chapters of the *Pramanavarttika* comment on the actual body of Dignaga’s *Compendium of Pramana*, *i.e.*, the six chapters of the text. Among the eight ‘pivotal points of logic’, the third chapter presents correct and false direct perceivers, and the fourth chapter presents correct and false proof statements as well as correct and false refutations.

### **Elucidation of the Path to Liberation**

Dharmakirti’s verses are very terse and their meaning often difficult to access. Therefore, students of the *Pramanavarttika* mostly rely on one or more of its commentaries.

One of these commentaries is Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* (which is written in prose). It is one of the foremost Tibetan commentaries on the *Pramanavarttika* still studied, debated, and meditated on in most Gelugpa monastic institutions; it is thus part of a living and vibrant philosophical tradition. Contemporary masters regularly refer to it (and Dharmakirti’s root text) when explaining past and future lives, the four noble truths, liberation, Buddhahood, and so forth.

Gyaltsab Je composed the *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* based on the Indian commentaries on the *Pramavarttika*. However, unlike most Indian commentators, Gyaltsab Je provides extremely

detailed outlines, as is customary in many Tibetan treatises. The **Elucidation** structures Dharmakirti's root text by dividing it into numerous textual sections, with each section having a different heading. The advantage of such a systematic format is that the text becomes more accessible and easier to comprehend.

Furthermore, not only does Gyaltsab Je offer comprehensive explanations of the meaning of Dharmakirti's verses, he also provides lengthy discussions, thought-provoking analysis, and invaluable summaries.

In the **Elucidation of the Path to Liberation**, he begins the presentation of the second chapter by bowing down to the revered Gurus. Thereafter, he cites the "second heading", which is the main heading of the second chapter. This heading is referred to as the "second heading", for it is the second of three headings cited at the beginning of the **Elucidation**. These three are really the subheadings of an earlier heading, which together with yet another heading constitute the basic headings of the four chapters of the *Pramanavarttika*. The two basic headings are:

- (1) The means for oneself to ascertain liberation and the paths that lead there
- (2) Having ascertained these, the means of assisting others [to ascertain liberation and the paths that lead there]

Of these two, the second is the main heading of the fourth chapter, while the first (as mentioned above) is the one that has three sub-headings:

- (1.1) The means of ascertaining hidden phenomena
- (1.2) An explanation of the objects of ascertainment — liberation, omniscience and the paths that lead there
- (1.3) The means of ascertaining obvious/manifest phenomena

Among the three subheadings, the first is the main heading of the first chapter, the second is the main heading of the second chapter, and the third is the main heading of the third chapter.

After citing the main heading of the second chapter, Gyaltsab Je gives a short introduction to the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*, in which he briefly explains the meaning of the two lines of homage of Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana* and the reason for establishing that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*. Thereafter he starts his elucidation of the verses in Dharmakirti's second chapter.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDYING THE INTRODUCTION

1. Who composed the *Compendium of Pramana* and how many chapters does it have?
2. Who composed the *Pramanavarttika* and how many chapters does it have?
3. Who composed the *Elucidation of the Path of Liberation*?
4. Which of these three commentaries are written in verse and which are written in prose?
5. On which text does the *Pramanavarttika* primarily comment?
6. On which text does the *Elucidation of the Path of Liberation* primarily comment?
7. Which philosophical tenet school does Dignaga follow?
8. Which philosophical tenet school does Dharmakirti follow?
9. Which philosophical tenet school does Gyaltsab Je follow?
10. Among the *Seven Treatises of the Pramana*, which are the three treatises that are like a body, and which four treatises are like branches?
11. Which of the three *treatises that are like a body* is the longest and which one is the shortest?

## The Second Chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*

12. How are Dignaga and Dharmakirti significant from the point of view of logic or epistemology?
13. Why are the first three treatises *like a body*, and the last four *like branches*?
14. What are the eight 'pivotal points of logic'? Think of an example for each of the eight.
15. Which of the eight 'pivotal points of logic' are mainly for one's own benefit, and which are mainly for the benefit of others?
16. Why are the four correct 'pivotal points of logic' important for Buddhist practice?
17. Why are the four false 'pivotal points of logic' explained?
18. What does an inferential cognizer depend upon in order to realize its main object?
19. What is main subject matter of the first chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*?
20. What is main subject matter of the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*?
21. What is main subject matter of the third chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*?
22. What is main subject matter of the fourth chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*?
23. Why did Dharmakirti compose the second chapter?
24. Why is the topic of logic or epistemology called "*Pramana*", i.e., "valid cognizer"?
25. How is the *Elucidation of the Path of Liberation* different from most Indian commentaries?

## **Second Chapter of the *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation, a Detailed Explanation of the Verse Lines of the Pramanavarttika***

I bow down to the revered gurus

The second [heading] is:

### **EXPLANATION OF [THIS CHAPTER'S] OBJECTS OF REALIZATION – LIBERATION, OMNISCIENCE, AND THE PATHS THAT LEAD THERE**

As mentioned above, the main heading of the second chapter is: **Explanation of the Objects of Realization- Liberation, Omniscience, and the Paths that Lead There.** Therefore, the main topics of the second chapter are liberation, omniscience, and the different paths leading to either of these states.

[The main heading of the second chapter is divided in two:]

- (1) General meaning
- (2) Meaning of the branches

In the *General Meaning*, Gyaltsab Je provides an introductory explanation. In the *Meaning of the Branches*, he starts the actual explanation of the verses of the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*.

### **THE GENERAL MEANING**

[This is divided into:]

- (1) Citing the explanation by Acharya Dignaga
- (2) The way the meaning [of Dignaga's explanation] is elucidated by the author of the *Pramanavarttika*
- (3) [Dignaga and Dharmakirti's] view

Under the first heading — **Citing the explanation by Acharya Dignaga** — Gyaltsab Je cites the first two lines of Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana* (the homage) and two lines that are the promise to compose the text. The two lines of homage from the *Compendium of Pramana* are referred to here as the *explanation by Dignaga*.

After citing the homage and the promise to compose the text, Gyaltsab Je briefly explains the meaning of those four lines.

The reason for citing the homage at the beginning of the second chapter is that, as mentioned before, the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* chiefly comments on the first two lines of Dignaga's homage.

### **CITING THE EXPLANATION BY ACHARYA DIGNAGA**

[The homage and the promise to compose the text read:]

*To the one who has become a valid cognizer, the one wishing to benefit migrators,  
To “the teacher”, “the sugata”, “the protector” I bow down.*

*Out of love for migrators deceived by faulty logicians,  
I will properly explain [the chapter on] the establishment of valid cognition.*

As mentioned above, the first two lines are from Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana*. With those words Dignaga pays homage to Buddha Shakyamuni. However, the latter two lines are not from Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana*. Instead, they are the promise to compose the text taken from Prajnakaragupta's *Ornament of the Pramanavarttika* (*Pramanavarttikalamkara; tshad ma rnam 'grel gyi rgyan*), which is a commentary on the *Compendium of Pramana*. Prajnakaragupta was an important master of the *Pramana* teachings.

The promise to compose the text from Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana* reads:

*In order to establish valid cognizers, I will herewith compose one [text]  
as a compendium  
Of all my [other] texts that provided various scattered explanations.*

Some scholars explain that Gyaltsab Je intentionally cited Prajnakaragupta's promise to compose the text instead of Dignaga's in order to indicate that the explanations Prajnakaragupta provides in his commentary accord with those given by Dignaga in the *Compendium of Pramana*.

In brief, the meaning of this [verse] is as follows: The first half presents the homage and the second half the promise to compose [the text]. The homage praises the Teacher [Buddha Shakyamuni] for both his excellent causes and his excellent results. The excellent causes are twofold: (a) excellent intention and (b) excellent application. [Excellent] intention refers to great compassion that wishes to completely benefit beings. [Excellent] application refers to "the teacher": [an awareness] familiarizing itself, for the sake of others, with the wisdom realizing selflessness.

Gyaltsab Je explains that Dignaga pays homage to Buddha Shakyamuni by way of praising the Buddha's excellent causes and results. The excellent causes he cites are (a) intention and (b) application. In general, excellent intention refers to the proper motivation for becoming a Buddha; the motivation that focuses on the benefit of sentient beings, while excellent application refers to engaging in the actual practices impelled by that motivation.

Here, excellent intention is more specifically explained to refer mainly to great compassion. Great compassion is a mental factor that is defined as a loving attitude wishing for all sentient beings to be free from suffering. Yet, as explained below, excellent intention also refers to Bodhicitta, great love, and so forth.

Excellent application, which is called "teacher", here refers mainly to the wisdom realizing selflessness in the continuum of a practitioner who aspires to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. The Buddha, who teaches selflessness perfectly, is the actual teacher. But since the wisdom realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Mahayana practitioner is a cause for becoming a Buddha, the name of the result (teacher) is given to the cause (the wisdom realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva).

The reason for giving the name of the result to the cause is that the Buddha attained full enlightenment in dependence on previously having meditated on selflessness (while a Bodhisattva). Also, the main teaching given by the Buddha in order to lead all sentient beings to liberation and Buddhahood is the teaching on selflessness.

Therefore, Lama Tsongkhapa says in his *Praise to Dependent Arising*:

*Since this teaching is not seen in [the works of] others  
The title of Teacher is yours alone.*

The Buddha is like a skilled physician who identifies the real underlying cause of a disease and is able to prescribe a treatment that eradicates that cause.



However, excellent application — “the teacher” — also refers to the wisdom realizing impermanence, the wisdom realizing the four noble truths, the practice of the six perfections, and so on.

The words of Dignaga's homage that indicate excellent intention and excellent application are:

... to the one wishing to benefit migrators;  
To “the teacher” ...

[Excellent] results are also [twofold]: (a) the excellent own benefit [kaya] and (b) the excellent others' benefit [kaya]. The excellent own benefit [kaya] refers to [the Buddha] being endowed with the three special qualities of “the sugata”, the nature of which is elimination and realization. [The excellent] others' benefit [kaya] refers to [the Rupakaya] which has the quality of protecting migrators by way of teaching others the path [the Buddha] himself has realized.

Having engaged in prolonged and extensive meditation on the excellent intention and the excellent application, practitioners eventually attain the two excellent results of a Buddha: (a) the excellent own benefit kaya; and (b) the excellent others' benefit kaya.

The *excellent own benefit kaya* refers to “the sugata” (*bde bar gshegs pa*; the one gone to bliss / the one arrived at bliss). However, here, “the sugata” does not refer to Buddha Shakyamuni, himself, but to his cessations and realizations. Therefore, “the sugata” is categorized into: (1) *sugata-eliminations*, and (2) *sugata-realizations*. These two constitute the Buddha's excellent own benefit kaya for they are the Buddha's qualities that mainly benefit the Buddha himself.

The Buddha's eliminations and realizations are both called *sugata* (*i.e.*, “the one gone to bliss”/“the one arrived at bliss”) because, owing to the Buddha's irrevocable cessation of all obstructions and the fact that his enlightened mind is able to directly and simultaneously realize *all* phenomena, the Buddha is free from any kind of non-blissful state, *i.e.*, he is free from any type of imperfection..

As mentioned above. in the ***Elucidation of the Path to Liberation***, each of the two categories of “the sugata” has three special qualities. The three qualities of *sugata-eliminations* are:

1. Properly eliminated
2. Eliminated without return
3. Completely eliminated

The first quality distinguishes the Buddha's elimination of obstructions from the elimination of coarse afflictions in the continuum of non-Buddhist practitioners. The Buddha has eliminated obstructions properly because his cessations are irrevocable, while the cessations of non-Buddhists are merely temporary.

The second quality distinguishes the Buddha's eliminations from the eliminations of Aryas on the path of learning, such as Arya Hearers and Solitary Realizers, who have only eliminated objects of elimination of the path of seeing. The Buddha has eliminated obstructions without return because, unlike those practitioners, he no longer returns, *i.e.*, takes birth in Samsara under the control of afflictions and contaminated karma.

The third quality distinguishes the Buddha's eliminations from the eliminations in the continuum of Hearer and Solitary Realizer Foe Destroyers. The Buddha has completely eliminated obstructions to liberation and omniscience, while Hearer and Solitary Realizer Foe Destroyers have only eliminated obstructions to liberation.

Non-Buddhists possess none of the three qualities. Hearer and Solitary Realizer Aryas on the path of seeing who have only eliminated objects of elimination of the path of seeing possess the first quality, but not the latter two. Hearer and Solitary Realizer Foe Destroyers possess the first two qualities, but not the last one.

The three qualities of *sugata-realizations* are:

1. Realizing suchness
2. Being stable realizations
3. Realizing completely

The Buddha realizes suchness because he directly realizes the mode of subsistence of the four noble truths. His realizations are stable because his teachings do not contradict valid cognition in the least. Also, the Buddha realizes phenomena completely because he directly realizes the methods that lead to liberation and omniscience together with the results of those methods.

As before, the first quality distinguishes the Buddha's realizations from the realizations of non-Buddhists, the second quality distinguishes them from the realizations of Aryas on the path of learning, and the third from Hearer and Solitary Realizer and Destroyers.

The *excellent others' benefit kaya* refers to the Buddha's Rupakaya. The Rupakaya is classified into the Nirmanakaya and Samboghakaya. These two kayas mainly benefit sentient beings by teaching them what to adopt and what to discard, *i.e.*, by teaching them the methods for attaining liberation and omniscience.

The excellent others' benefit kaya (and thus the Rupakaya) is referred to as "protector" for it protects sentient beings from the obstructions to liberation and omniscience.

The words of Dignaga's homage that indicate the excellent own benefit kaya and the excellent others' benefit kaya are:

...*"the sugata"*, *"the protector"*...."

Therefore, the Buddha, the Bhagavan, who from excellent causes has arisen as a valid cognizer endowed with the entity of the excellent results of the twofold benefits, is known as "genuine valid cognizer".

The words, "who from excellent causes has arisen as valid cognizer", indicate that the Buddha was at some point an ordinary sentient being, who in dependence on excellent causes gradually attained full enlightenment. This distinguishes the Buddha from a creator god since a creator god is asserted to have always been divine without, at some point, having newly attained such a godly state through listening, contemplating and meditating.

Also, the Buddha is omniscient but not omnipotent; he is unable to bestow happiness or inflict suffering on sentient beings. Instead, he teaches them the methods to attain liberation and omniscience in accordance with their predispositions, aspirations, interests, and so forth.

The Buddha having arisen as valid cognizer and being known as genuine valid cognizer does not literally mean that the Buddha *is* a valid cognizer, for a valid cognizer is necessarily a consciousness, whereas the Buddha is a person and thus not a consciousness.

However, the Buddha is called a "valid cognizer" because he is a *valid cognizer being* (*tshad ma'i skye bu*). He is a *valid cognizer being* because, through his own power (without depending on another teacher), he unerringly and effortlessly teaches those seeking release whatever they need to know to reach their goal.

A valid cognizer is defined as: a knower that is newly non-deceptive. This means that a valid cognizer is an awareness that newly realizes its main object. In other words, it realizes its main object *without* depending on a previous moment of consciousness that realized the same object. Examples of valid cognizers are the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing a table and the first moment of an inferential cognizer realizing selflessness. Valid cognizers are explained in detail below.

There is a purpose for [calling the second chapter] the “establishment of valid cognition.” [The purpose is] to attend to migrators who are mistaken with regard to the mode of existence [of phenomena] because they apply an incorrect definition of a valid cognizer, etc., [provided by] faulty logicians.

This paragraph explains the meaning of the two lines that constitute the promise to compose the text:

*Out of love for migrators deceived by faulty logicians,  
I will properly explain [the chapter on] the establishment of valid  
cognition*

The purpose for calling the second chapter, “the chapter on the establishment of valid cognition,” is to attend to (or address) those who are mistaken with regard to the mode of existence of phenomena because they do not understand the definition of a valid cognizer. They do not understand the definition because they rely on faulty logicians who are unable to define a valid cognizer correctly.

In brief, under this heading Gyaltsab Je explains the meaning of the two lines of homage from Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana* and the meaning of the two lines that constitute the promise to compose the text from Prajnakaragupta's *Ornament of Pramana*.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What are the main topics of the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*?
2. Which words of Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana* does Dharmakirti's second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* mainly comment on?
3. Who does Dignaga pay homage to in his *Compendium of Pramana*?
4. What are the two excellent causes?
5. Why are these two *excellent* causes?
6. Why is the wisdom realizing selflessness called *teacher*?
7. What are the two excellent results?
8. What are the two categories of “the sugata”
9. Why is the first excellent result an *own benefit kaya*?
10. Why is the second excellent result an *others' benefit kaya*?
11. Why are the Buddha's cessation and realizations referred to as *sugata* / the one gone to bliss/the one arrived at bliss?
12. What are the three qualities of *sugata-eliminations*?
13. What are the three qualities of *sugata-realizations*?
14. How many of the three qualities of *sugata-eliminations* does a Hinayana Foe Destroyer possess?
15. How many of the three qualities of *sugata-realizations* does a non-Buddhist possess?
16. Why is the second excellent result referred to as “protector”?
17. Is the Buddha a valid cognizer?
18. Why is Buddha Shakyamuni described as, “the one who accomplished valid cognizers”?
19. What is the definition of a valid cognizer?
20. What is the meaning of a *valid cognizer being*?
21. Is a *valid cognizer being* necessarily a Buddha?

## THE WAY THE MEANING [OF DIGNAGA'S EXPLANATION] IS ELUCIDATED BY THE AUTHOR OF THE *PRAMANAVARTTIKA*

Under this heading, Gyalsab Je describes how Dharmakirti elucidates in his *Pramanavarttika* the meaning of Dignaga's two lines of homage.

[The meaning of] the first half of the [first] verse [of the **Compendium of Pramana**] is taught by way of drawing out five factors: (a) the one who has become a valid cognizer, (b) the one wishing to benefit migrators, (c) “the teacher”, (d) “the sugata” and (e) “the protector”. Furthermore, the first [“the one who has become a valid cognizer”] is the basis of the [four] special qualities that are to be established; the remaining [four] are the special qualities which establish [the one who has become a valid cognizer].

As cited above, the first half of the first verse in Dignaga's **Compendium of Pramana** is:

*To the one who has become a valid cognizer, the one wishing to  
benefit migrators,  
To “the teacher”, “the sugata”, “the protector”, I bow down.*

The five factors are:

- a. The one who has become a valid cognizer: a *valid cognizer being*;
- b. The one wishing to benefit migrators: great compassion, etc.;
- c. “The teacher”: the wisdom realizing selflessness, etc.;
- d. “The sugata”: (i) *sugata-eliminations* and (ii) *sugata-realizations*;
- e. “The protector”: the Rupakaya that protects sentient beings by teaching them what is to be adopted and what is to be discarded with regard to the four noble truths

As mentioned above, the main topics of the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* are liberation, omniscience and the paths that lead to these states. Dharmakirti presents these topics by way of expounding on the five factors.

Of those five, the last four (the one wishing to benefit migrators, “the teacher”, “the sugata” and “the protector”) establish or prove the first factor; namely, that the Buddha has become a valid cognizer, *i.e.*, that he is a *valid cognizer being*. Therefore, Gyalsab Je says that the one who has become a valid cognizer is the basis of the four special qualities, *i.e.*, the basis of the last four factors. That basis is the object that is to be established (the *probandum*) or proved. The four latter factors are the special qualities which establish or prove that the Buddha is the one who is a *valid cognizer being*.

There are two ways of explaining [the last four factors as proofs of the first factor]: one is by means of the *forward system*, which refers to the explanation that is in accordance with the sequence [of those five] presented in [Dignaga's] verse, while the other is by means of the *reverse system* which is the opposite.

The four latter factors are the proofs (*sgrub byed*), which establish that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*, because they are the correct reasons that prove or establish that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*. Furthermore, there are two ways in which these four serve as proofs or correct reasons: one is by means of the *forward system*, and the other is by means of the *reverse system*.

The *forward system* here refers to the sequence of the five factors as presented in Dignaga's two lines of homage. The sequence of the five according to the *forward system* is: (a) the one who has become a valid cognizer, (b) the one wishing to benefit migrators, (c) “the teacher”, (d) “the sugata” and (e) “the protector”.

As to the way in which the four factors establish that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*: first, (the second factor) great compassion is established. Thereafter, great compassion

serves as the proof or correct reason that establishes (the third factor) “the teacher”; “the teacher” serves as the correct reason that establishes (the fourth factor) “the sugata”; “the sugata” serves as the correct reason that establishes (the fifth factor) “the teacher”; and “the teacher” serves as the correct reason that establishes the main object to be established (the *probandum*), (the first factor) the *valid cognizer being*. Hence, there are five syllogisms of the *forward system*.

Please note that there are different ways of formulating these syllogisms. The syllogisms cited here are translations of the five syllogisms according to the *forward system* as presented in Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* or in Geshe Wangchen’s<sup>3</sup> *Soft Rain of the Utpala Flowers’ Eloquent Speech*:

1. The first syllogism (from Geshe Wangchen’s *Soft Rain*) establishes the second factor, great compassion, in dependence on a correct reason that is none of the five factors:

**Regarding the subject, effortful (i.e., contrived) affectionate compassion that wishes to liberate all migrators from suffering, if one has familiarized oneself well with that compassion, it can become an effortless (i.e., uncontrived) awareness, because it is a mental quality that has a stable basis and does not depend on repeated concerted efforts once it has become familiar.**

The subject of the syllogism is contrived great compassion (“effortful affectionate compassion that wishes to liberate all migrators from suffering”). The predicate of the syllogism is great compassion (“if one has familiarized oneself well with that compassion it can become an uncontrived awareness”). The correct reason is that great compassion is a mental quality that has a stable basis and does not depend on repeated concerted efforts once it has become familiar.

Please note that *contrived* great compassion refers to a type of compassion that does not qualify as actual great compassion because it is not constant and does not arise spontaneously. Actual great compassion is *uncontrived*, for it refers to the constant and spontaneous affection that wants all sentient beings to be free from suffering. However, developing contrived great compassion serves as a stepping-stone to the development of uncontrived great compassion since it precedes the development of the latter.

2. The second syllogism (from Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation*) establishes the third factor, “the teacher”, in dependence on the reason, great compassion (the second factor):

**Regarding the subject, affectionate Bodhisattvas on the path of preparation, they initially meditate by means of two types of exertion (intense and continuous exertion) in order to directly perceive the methods to pacify suffering, because they are mundane beings who wish to conquer the suffering of all sentient beings.**

The subject of the syllogism is: ‘affectionate Bodhisattvas on the path of preparation’. The predicate of the syllogism is: “the teacher” (“they initially meditate by means of two types of exertion in order to directly perceive the methods to pacify suffering”). The correct reason is great compassion (“they are mundane beings who wish to conquer the suffering of all sentient beings”).

3. The third syllogism (from Geshe Wangchen’s *Soft Rain*) establishes the fourth factor, “the sugata”, in dependence on the reason, “the teacher” (the third factor):

**Regarding the subject, the Muni, the [Buddha] Bhagavan, he has *sugata-eliminations* in his continuum, because he is a being who, for the benefit of all sentient beings, has perfected familiarization with the application, the wisdom realizing selflessness.**

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<sup>3</sup> Geshe Wangchen is a great contemporary master from Drepung Loseling Monastery.

The subject of the syllogism is Bhagavan Buddha Shakyamuni. The predicate of the syllogism is “the sugata” (“he has *sugata-eliminations* in his continuum”). The correct reason is “the teacher” (“he is a being who, for the benefit of all sentient beings, has perfected familiarization with the application, the wisdom realizing selflessness”).

4. The fourth syllogism (from Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation*) establishes the fifth factor, “the protector” in dependence on the reason, “the sugata” (the fourth factor):

**Regarding the subject, the Muni, the Buddha Bhagavan, he is the protector of those seeking release, because he has perfected the realization of the paths to liberation, and because he unerringly teaches others the paths he has realized without any thought of reward, fame and so forth.**

The subject of the syllogism is Bhagavan Buddha Shakyamuni. The predicate of the syllogism is “the protector” (“he is the protector of those seeking release”). The correct reason is “the sugata” (“he has perfected the realization of the paths to liberation, and because he unerringly teaches others the paths he has realized without any thought of reward, fame and so forth”).

5. The fifth syllogism (from Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation*) establishes the first factor (the main object to be established, the *probandum*), a *valid cognizer being*, in dependence on the reason, “the protector” (the fifth factor):

**Regarding the subject, the Muni, the Buddha Bhagavan, he is a *valid cognizer being* for those seeking release, because he serves as refuge to those seeking release by way of teaching them the paths to liberation, and because he has perfected the ability to protect them.**

The subject of the syllogism is Bhagavan Buddha Shakyamuni. The predicate of the syllogism is the *valid cognizer being* (“he is a *valid cognizer being* for those seeking release”). The correct reason is “the protector” (“he serves as refuge to those seeking release by way of teaching them the paths to liberation, and because he has perfected the ability to protect them”).

As mentioned above, of the two ways in which the four factors prove that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*, the second way is from the point of view of the *reverse system*. The *reverse system* here refers to a sequence of the five factors that is the opposite of the sequence presented in Dignaga’s two lines of homage. This reverse sequence is: (a) “the protector” (b) “the sugata”, (c) “the teacher”, (d) the one wishing to benefit migrators, and (e) the one who has become a valid cognizer.

As to the way in which the four factors of the *reverse system* establish that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*: first (the first factor) “the protector” is established. Then “the protector” serves as the correct reason that establishes (the second factor) “the sugata”; “the sugata” serves as the correct reason that establishes (the third factor) “the teacher”; “the teacher” serves as the correct reason that establishes (the fourth factor) great compassion, and great compassion serves as the correct reason that establishes the main object to be established, the *probandum*, (the fifth factor) the *valid cognizer being*.

As before, there are different ways of formulating these syllogisms. The syllogisms cited here are translations of the five syllogisms according to the *reverse system* as presented in Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* or in Khedrup Je’s *Ocean of Reasoning, a Great Commentary on the Pramanavarttika*:

The five syllogisms of the *reverse system* are:

1. The first syllogism (from Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation*) establishes the first factor, “the protector”, in dependence on a correct reason that is none of the five factors:

**Regarding the subject, the Muni, the [Buddha] Bhagavan, he is a protector of those seeking release, because he has attained perfection with regard to**

**unerringly teaching the mode of existence of the four noble truths to those striving for release.**

The subject of the syllogism is Bhagavan Buddha Shakyamuni, the predicate of the syllogism is “the protector” (“he is a protector of those seeking release”), and the correct reason is that Buddha Shakyamuni has attained perfection with regard to unerringly teaching the mode of existence of the four noble truths to those striving for release.

2. The second syllogism (from Khedrup Je’s *Ocean of Reasoning*) establishes the second factor, “the sugata”, in dependence on the reason, “the protector” (the first factor):

**Regarding the subject, the [Buddha] Bhagavan, he is endowed with “the sugata” that possesses the three qualities of realizations, because he is the protector who, without depending on another master, teaches all the points and methods of adoption and relinquishment with regard to the four noble truths.**

The subject of the syllogism is Buddha Shakyamuni, the predicate of the syllogism is “the sugata” (“he is endowed with “the sugata” that possesses the three qualities of realizations”), and the correct reason is “the protector” (“he is the protector who, without depending on another master, teaches all the points and methods of adoption and relinquishment with regard to the four noble truths”).

3. The third syllogism (from Khedrup Je’s *Ocean of Reasoning*) establishes the third factor, “the teacher”, in dependence on the reason, “the sugata” (the second factor):

**Regarding the subject, the [Buddha] Bhagavan, he is preceded by the excellent application which, for the welfare of others, familiarized for a long time with the wisdom realizing selflessness, because he obtained the sugata that possesses the three qualities of realizations.**

The subject of the syllogism is Buddha Shakyamuni, the predicate of the syllogism is “the teacher” (“he is preceded by the excellent application which for the welfare of others, familiarized for a long time with the wisdom realizing selflessness”), and the correct reason is “the sugata” (“he obtained the sugata that possesses the three qualities of realizations”).

4. The fourth syllogism (from Khedrup Je’s *Ocean of Reasoning*) establishes the fourth factor, great compassion, in dependence on the reason, “the teacher” (the third factor):

**Regarding the subject, the [Buddha] Bhagavan, he is preceded by great compassion that wishes to benefit all migrators, because for the welfare of others he perfected prolonged familiarization with the wisdom realizing selflessness.**

The subject of the syllogism is Buddha Shakyamuni, the predicate of the syllogism is great compassion (“he is preceded by great compassion that wishes to benefit all migrators”), and the correct reason is “the teacher” (“for the welfare of others he perfected prolonged familiarization with the wisdom realizing selflessness”).

5. The fifth syllogism (from Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation*) establishes the fifth factor (the main object to be established, the *probandum*), a *valid cognizer being*, in dependence on the reason, great compassion (the fourth factor):

**Regarding the subject, the [Buddha] Bhagavan, he thoroughly accomplished the state of being a *valid cognizer being* which is non-deceptive with regard to those seeking release, because he is the Teacher who perfected his own and others’ benefit.**

The subject of the syllogism is Buddha Shakyamuni, the predicate of the syllogism is the *valid cognizer being* ("he thoroughly accomplished the state of being a *valid cognizer being* which is non-deceptive with regard to those seeking release"), and the correct reason is great compassion ("he is the Teacher who perfected his own and others' benefit").

Please note that the syllogism that establishes "the sugata" by means of the *forward system* explicitly establishes that the Buddha is endowed with the three qualities of *sugata-eliminations*, while the syllogism that establishes "the sugata" by means of the *reverse system* explicitly establishes that the Buddha is endowed with the three qualities of *sugata-realizations*.

The reason for the two [ways of proving that the Buddha is a valid cognizer] is that [some say]:

*Since there exists no proof  
That there are valid cognizers that know hidden phenomena ...*

They argue that becoming familiar with any of the methods for becoming an All-Knowing One, who has become a valid cognizer, is not a cause that gives rise to an omniscient consciousness that is such [a valid cognizer].

Also, [they argue that] there is no reason for [the existence of] an omniscient consciousness as declared, for instance, in the statement: "Such omniscient consciousness exists, because we see its results or nature."

The two lines —

*Since there exists no proof,  
That there are valid cognizers that know hidden phenomena ...*

— are from Dharmakirti's second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*. The meaning of these words will be explained in more detail below.

Even though the two lines are from the *Pramanavarttika*, they do not express Dharmakirti's position; rather, they articulate two types of wrong view held by some non-Buddhists (mainly by followers of the *Lokayata* and *Mimamsaka* systems). The first refers to the view that (1) there is no omniscient consciousness, because there are no causes that give rise to an omniscient consciousness; while the second wrong view is that (2) there is no omniscient consciousness, because there is no correct reason that establishes an omniscient consciousness.

Like Buddhist philosophers, the non-Buddhists who hold the second wrong view accept that a correct reason that establishes a phenomenon (the predicate) must be either of one nature with the phenomenon or the result of that phenomenon. Therefore, according to those non-Buddhists, if there were (hypothetically) a correct reason that established an omniscient consciousness, it would have to be either of one nature with the omniscient consciousness or the result of the omniscient consciousness. However, they hold that such a correct reason does not exist.

The two wrong views are the reason why Dharmakirti presents two ways to prove that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*: the *forward system* and the *reverse system*.

The *forward system* is set forth in order to refute the first wrong view while the *reverse system* is set forth in order to refute the second [wrong view].

Establishing that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* by means of the *forward system* refutes the first wrong view that there are no causes which give rise to an omniscient consciousness. Establishing that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* by means of the



*reverse system* refutes the wrong view that there is no proof or correct reason that establishes an omniscient consciousness.

Since the excellent intention – great compassion – is the first proof, it is indicated explicitly. [Great compassion is also] representative of Bodhicitta. Furthermore, excellent application – [the awareness that develops] familiarity with the wisdom realizing selflessness for the sake of others – is the main activity. Since that [activity] is representative of the training in generosity, morality, and so forth [they are] indicated [here], too.

Great compassion is the first proof of the Buddha being a *valid cognizer being*, i.e., great compassion is cited as the first correct reason, in dependence on which one establishes that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*, because it is the most important awareness practitioners of the Mahayana have to generate initially. Therefore, the words, "the one wishing to benefit migrators" explicitly indicate great compassion. However, these words also indicate Bodhicitta, great love, the special attitude, and so forth since great compassion is representative of Bodhicitta, etc.

Furthermore, the words, "the teacher", explicitly indicate the wisdom realizing selflessness, for it is one of the main awarenesses with which Bodhisattvas familiarize themselves for the benefit of sentient beings. Yet the words also imply the wisdom realizing impermanence, the practice of the perfections of generosity, morality, patience, and so forth, since the wisdom realizing selflessness is representative of these other awarenesses.

The [section on the] first way of explaining [the five factors according to the *forward system*] elucidates the manner in which the teacher arrived [at this goal and] through what paths.

The section of the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* that sets forth the five factors according to the *forward system* describes the different practices in which Bodhisattvas engage to reach the state of a Buddha — the motivation they generate, the various method and wisdom practices, and so forth. Therefore, in dependence on the syllogisms of the *forward system*, one comes to understand the causes that give rise to an omniscient consciousness.

The way one comes to such an understanding is as follows: in dependence on the first syllogism cited above one initially realizes great compassion, the loving attitude that wishes for all sentient beings to be free from suffering. Based on such a realization, one is able to infer that those who possess great compassion engage tirelessly in the different Mahayana practices for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Also, having reflected on the suffering of sentient beings, one understands that suffering is the result of afflictions and contaminated karma, which in turn are rooted in the ignorance grasping at the self. One realizes that in order to eliminate others' suffering, Bodhisattvas first need to eradicate suffering and its root in their own continuum, which can only be accomplished by cultivating the wisdom realizing selflessness. Hence, it is in dependence on great compassion that one realizes "the teacher", the wisdom realizing selflessness.

Then one comes to understand that the wisdom that initially realizes selflessness conceptually is eventually able to realize selflessness directly. With this direct realization, Bodhisattvas are gradually able to irrevocably eliminate the different layers of the obstructions to liberation and omniscience. Thus, in dependence on the wisdom that realizes selflessness, one is able to realize *sugata-eliminations*.

Thereafter, one comes to understand that the one who has attained the cessation of all shortcomings for the benefit of sentient beings is able to protect sentient beings by teaching them the methods for attaining the same state. This means that in dependence on *sugata-eliminations* one realizes "the protector".

Eventually, in dependence on “the protector” one realizes that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* free from any type of fault with regard to perfectly teaching what is to be adopted and what is to be discarded. Therefore, by proceeding through these steps of realization one comes to understand that the Buddha is not a permanent naturally-arisen being, like a creator god, but that he became a *valid cognizer being* by — prior to attaining enlightenment — progressively cultivating and familiarizing himself with the causes for enlightenment, such as great compassion, the wisdom realizing selflessness, and so on. In this way, one refutes the above-mentioned assertion that the omniscient mind of the Buddha does not have any causes.

The [section on the] second way [of presenting the five factors according to the *reverse system*] first delineates the four [noble] truths. Then, having established through [correct] signs that the Buddha has excellent realizations, and from that, that [certain] causes must precede [Buddhahood], [this section] indicates the correct reason [that establishes] how [the Buddha] has arrived [at his goal] in dependence on these paths.

The section of the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* that explains the five factors according to the *reverse system* first expounds on the four noble truths. Then, by means of citing two correct signs or syllogisms, it establishes that the Buddha possesses excellent realizations. As mentioned before, the first syllogism establishes that the Buddha is “the protector” who unerringly teaches the four noble truths.

The second syllogism proves, in dependence on “the protector”, that the Buddha possesses the three qualities of *sugata-realizations*.

The third and fourth syllogisms establish that the Buddha is preceded by particular causes. The third syllogism proves, in dependence on *sugata-realizations*, that the Buddha is preceded by “the teacher”, the wisdom realizing selflessness. The fourth syllogism establishes, in dependence on “the teacher”, that the Buddha is preceded by great compassion.

Therefore, in dependence on these syllogisms one comes to understand that — contrary to the assertion of some non-Buddhists — there are correct reasons that prove the existence of the omniscient consciousness.

The way one comes to such an understanding is as follows:

By relying on the second section, which explains the five factors according to the *reverse system*, one initially realizes what the Buddha chiefly teaches: the truth of suffering, the truth of the origin, the truth of cessation and the truth of the path. Having thoroughly understood these, one examines the person who first introduced the four truths — the Buddha himself — and comes to realize “the protector”.

One understands that the Buddha taught the four noble truths through his own power, because without depending on other masters he incontrovertibly realized the nature of these truths. Hence, in dependence on “the protector”, one realizes his *sugata-realizations*.

When examining *sugata-realizations*, one comes to understand that these realizations have not existed naturally since beginningless time, but that they were cultivated by meditating on the wisdom realizing selflessness. Thus, in dependence on *sugata-realizations*, one realizes that the Buddha was preceded by “the teacher”, *i.e.*, that he was preceded by the wisdom realizing selflessness.

Then one comes to understand that familiarizing himself with this wisdom while accumulating merit for three countless eons was only possible because — prior to becoming a Buddha, as a Bodhisattva — he was motivated by the affectionate awareness that is unable to bear sentient beings' suffering. Therefore, in dependence on “the teacher”, one realizes that the Buddha was preceded by the cultivation of great compassion.

Eventually, in dependence on great compassion, one realizes that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*.

In brief, under this heading, Gyaltsab Je provides a summary of the second chapter of Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika* by explaining how it reveals the meaning of Dignaga's homage through setting forth the five factors. The five factors are set forth by way of four factors (the one wishing to benefit migrators, “the teacher”, and “the protector”) serving as proofs or correct reasons that establish the fifth factor: that the Buddha is the *one who has become a valid cognizer, i.e., that the Buddha is a valid cognizer being*.

Establishing that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* in dependence on the four factors is divided in two: (1) establishing that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* by means of the *forward system* and (2) establishing that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* by means of the *reverse system*.

Establishing that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* by means of the *forward system* removes the wrong view that there are no causes that give rise to an omniscient consciousness; while establishing that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* by means of the *reverse system* removes the wrong view that there is no correct reason that establishes an omniscient consciousness.

Therefore, the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* can be divided into two sections: (1) the first proves that the Buddha is a valid cognizer by means of the *forward system*; and (2) the second proves that the Buddha is a valid cognizer by means of the *reverse system*.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What are the five factors that appear in the homage of Dignaga's *Compendium of Pramana*?
2. Of the five factors, which one is the object to be proved or established and which one is the proof?
3. What are the two systems that prove/establish the *valid cognizer being*?
4. What is the reason for presenting these two systems?
5. How many syllogisms are presented in the section on the forward system?
6. How many syllogisms are presented in the section on the reverse system?
7. Why do the words, “the one wishing to benefit migrators”, explicitly indicate great compassion?
8. Why do the words, “the teacher” explicitly indicate the wisdom realizing selflessness?
9. How do the syllogisms of the forward system refute the wrong view that there is no cause of an omniscient consciousness?
10. How do the syllogisms of the reverse system refute the wrong view that there is no reason for an omniscient consciousness?

## [DIGNAGA AND DHARMAKIRTI'S] VIEW

In order to accomplish the goal to which they resolutely aspire, those seeking release establish that the Teacher, the Bhagavan, is a valid cognizer by means of establishing that his teachings are faultless.

In order to be able to attain their goals, those seeking release (*i.e.*, liberation or Buddhahood) need to realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*. Realizing that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* is necessary in order to rely effectively on the Buddha, engage in continuous practice of his teachings, and eventually attain liberation or Buddhahood.

The understanding that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* is attained when one realizes that he is without fault. Yet, realizing that the Buddha is without fault must be preceded by realizing that his teachings are faultless.

In general, the Buddha's teachings can be categorized into scriptural teachings and experiential teachings. Scriptural teachings refer to the words of the Buddha that convey his teachings, while experiential teachings refer to the meaning these words express.

Therefore, the way one arrives at the realization that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* is as follows: First, one realizes that the experiential teachings of the Buddha are faultless; in dependence on that, one realizes that the scriptural teachings of the Buddha are faultless; and in dependence on that, one realizes that the Buddha himself is without fault — which is equivalent to realizing that he is a *valid cognizer being*.

[Someone:] It follows that it is pointless to establish that the Muni is a valid cognizer in order to accomplish a person's desired goals, because [goals] are accomplished through direct and inferential valid cognizers.

As mentioned before, valid cognizers can be categorized into: (a) direct valid cognizers (*i.e.*, valid cognizers that are direct perceivers) and (b) inferential valid cognizers (*i.e.*, valid cognizers that are inferential cognizers).

Direct valid cognizers are non-conceptual knowers that are newly non-deceptive. Examples of direct valid cognizers are the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing a table, a yogic direct perceiver realizing selflessness and an omniscient consciousness.

Inferential valid cognizers are conceptual knowers that are newly non-deceptive and arise in dependence on a correct reason. Examples of inferential valid cognizers are the first moment of an inferential cognizer realizing that there is fire on a mountain pass, the first moment of an inferential cognizer realizing that sound is impermanent, and the first moment of an inferential cognizer realizing selflessness.

Here someone presents the argument that it is pointless to establish that the Muni, *i.e.*, the Buddha, is a *valid cognizer being* in order to accomplish one's goals, because such goals can be attained by relying on direct or inferential valid cognizers that realize the four noble truths, impermanence, selflessness, and so forth, without having to realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*.

[Response:] The Muni is not established to be a valid cognizer for the sake of accomplishing just any goal, but in order to show that the Muni is a valid cognizer with regard to the methods for [attaining] high rebirths and the definite good.

The response to the argument above is that even though it may be possible to accomplish certain goals merely by relying on direct and inferential valid cognizers, the Buddha is not established to be a *valid cognizer being* in order to accomplish just any goal. Rather, he is established to be a *valid cognizer being* in order to prove that he is a *valid cognizer being*.

with regard to the methods for attaining high rebirths and definite good ('definite good' refers to liberation or Buddhahood).

The Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* with regard to the methods for attaining high rebirths, liberation and Buddhahood because he is able to perfectly teach the methods for attaining those states.

[Someone:] Even if it is for the sake of those goals, it [still] follows that it is pointless to establish that the Muni is a valid cognizer, because you accept that past and future lives, the four noble truths, etc., are established by inferential cognizers through the power of the fact.

The opponent replies that even if one aspires to attain goals such as high rebirths, liberation or Buddhahood, it is nonetheless pointless to establish that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* because past and future lives, the four noble truths, etc., are only slightly hidden phenomena that can be realized by inferential cognizers through the power of the fact. By means of realizing past and future lives, the four noble truths, etc., one comes to realize the existence of high rebirths, liberation and Buddhahood.

Having realized high rebirths, liberation and Buddhahood one is then able to engage in the practices that lead one to attain either of these states without having to realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*.

[Response:] There is no fault. Without initially relying on the teachings of the Blessed One, one will not even think of selflessness or momentariness of the subtle, not to mention realizing them inferentially. When those possessing discernment initially see that the Blessed One uninterruptedly taught that high rebirths, definitive goodness and the reasons establishing these are connected to worldly valid cognizers, they will thoroughly investigate whether what is taught [by the Buddha] really exists or not, and they will realize inferentially the mode [of existence of higher rebirths, definite goodness, etc.].

The response here is that there is no fault with regard to asserting that past and future lives, the four noble truths, etc., are realized by inferential cognizers through the power of the fact. However, one can realize these slightly hidden phenomena (in particular the four noble truths) only by relying on the Buddha's teachings.

Without listening to and contemplating the teachings of the Buddha, one will not even be able to reflect on, for instance, selflessness or *momentariness of the subtle*,<sup>4</sup> not to mention realizing them with an inferential cognizer. This is because the teachings on selflessness are unique to the teachings of the Buddha.

Furthermore, whatever is taught by the Buddha, such as high rebirths, liberation, etc., connects to worldly everyday valid cognition. When those possessing discernment understand this, they will thoroughly investigate the Buddha's teachings and attain inferential realization of the mode of existence of higher rebirths, liberation, and so forth.

Some scholars explain that here Gyaltsab Je agrees that it not necessary to realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* in order to *realize* hidden phenomena such as liberation and Buddhahood; although in order to realize liberation and Buddhahood, it is necessary to rely on listening to and contemplating the Buddha's teachings. Furthermore, those

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<sup>4</sup> Some scholars explain that here 'momentariness of the subtle' refers to: 'impermanence that is characterized by selflessness' (with 'the subtle' referring to selflessness). In order to realize *impermanence that is characterized by selflessness* on the basis of, for instance, a person, one first generates an awareness realizing the person's selflessness, and then an awareness realizing the person's impermanence. The later awareness realizing the person's *impermanence* is the awareness realizing the person's *impermanence that is characterized by selflessness*, for its realization of the person's impermanence is enhanced by the earlier awareness (realizing the person's selflessness). Therefore, even though the earlier awareness lies dormant at the time of the later awareness, nonetheless, it affects the later awareness, which is why the later awareness is said to be 'conjoined with' the earlier awareness.

possessing discernment are able to comprehend that the Buddha repeatedly taught that hidden phenomena such as liberation and Buddhahood connect to worldly everyday things (which are easy to understand), and through thorough analysis, they are able to realize these hidden phenomena.

According to those scholars, that response implies that even though it is not necessary to realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* in order to *realize* or understand liberation or Buddhahood, it is necessary to realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* in order to *attain* liberation or Buddhahood. The reason is that unless practitioners of the Buddha Dharma realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*, they will not be able to cultivate the type of firm and unwavering faith in the Buddha required to follow his instructions and practice over countless lifetimes, and even eons, until they attain their goals.

In brief, under this heading, Gyatsab Je explains that those seeking release need to realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* in order to be able to engage in effective and continuous practice and eventually attain liberation or Buddhahood. However, before being able to realize that the Buddha is a valid cognizer being, *i.e.*, that he is without fault, they need to realize that his teachings are faultless.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Is it necessary to realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* in order to realize hidden phenomena such as liberation and Buddhahood?
2. Why does one have to rely on the Buddha's teachings in order to realize liberation and Buddhahood?
3. Does one have to rely on the Buddha's teachings in order to realize selflessness or subtle impermanence?
4. Why do those seeking release have to realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* in order to attain liberation or Buddhahood?
5. What are the steps that lead to the realization that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*?
6. What is the opponent's main reason why it is not necessary to realize that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* in order to attain liberation or omniscience?
7. What is the meaning of experiential teachings?
8. What is the meaning of scriptural teachings?
9. Does one have to realize that *all* the teachings of the Buddha are faultless in order to be able to realize that he is a *valid cognizer being*?
10. By realizing that some of the Buddha's teachings are faultless one is able to realize that the Buddha is faultless with regard to those teachings. But how is one able to realize that the Buddha is faultless with regard to all of his teachings?

## **THE MEANING OF THE BRANCHES**

[This is divided into:]

- (1) Proving that the Muni is a valid cognizer
- (2) The purpose of praising [the Muni] on account of [being] a valid cognizer.

## **PROVING THAT THE MUNI IS A VALID COGNIZER**

[This is divided into:]

- (1) Showing by means of the forward system the manner in which the teacher arrived [at his goal] through what paths
- (2) Showing by means of the reverse system the reason for the Buddha having arrived [at his goal]

## **SHOWING BY MEANS OF THE FORWARD SYSTEM THE MANNER IN WHICH THE TEACHER ARRIVED [AT HIS GOAL] THROUGH WHAT PATHS**

This marks the beginning of the first section, which proves that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* by means of the *forward system*. Thus, it also marks the beginning of Gyaltsab Je explaining the verses of the second chapter of Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika*.

[This is divided into:]

- (1) Identifying the instance of a *valid cognizer being* by way of explaining the meaning of 'the one who has become a valid cognizer'
- (2) Identifying the definition of a *valid cognizer being* by way of explaining the four remaining [factors]
- (3) Identifying the paths that lead to [the state of being a *valid cognizer being*].

## **IDENTIFYING THE INSTANCE OF A VALID COGNIZER BEING BY EXPLAINING THE MEANING OF THE ONE WHO HAS BECOME A VALID COGNIZER**

[This is divided into:]

- (1) The general definition of a valid cognizer
- (2) Showing that the Muni also possesses that definition (*i.e.*, that the Muni is a *valid cognizer being* or that he possesses valid cognizers)

## **THE GENERAL DEFINITION OF A VALID COGNIZER**

[This is divided into:]

- (1) The nature of the definition
- (2) The characteristics

## **THE NATURE OF THE DEFINITION**

[This is divided into:]

- (1) The definition

- (2) The instances
- (3) Ascertaining that the instances [satisfy] the definition

## THE DEFINITION

[This is divided into:]

- (1) Identifying *Non-Deceptive*
- (2) Dispelling [the objection of] non-pervasion (*i.e.*, refuting the objection that the definition of a valid cognizer is too narrow)
- (3) Dispelling [the view of a] broad pervasion (*i.e.*, refuting the objection that the definition is too broad)

## IDENTIFYING NON-DECEPTIVE

[Someone:] The realization of objects of comprehension — high rebirths, the definite good and the methods [that lead to those goals] — depends on valid cognizers. If only the Muni is a valid cognizer with regard to [realizing] those objects in their entirety, what is the definition of a general valid cognizer which is such that by satisfying that definition [a consciousness] becomes a valid cognizer?

Here someone asks, if the realization of goals such as high rebirths, liberation, Buddhahood and the paths that lead to these states depend on valid cognizers, and if only the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* (while non-Buddhist teachers, etc., are not), what is the definition of a valid cognizer?

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*Pramana is a non-deceptive consciousness*

[Response:] Regarding the subject, a direct valid cognizer apprehending blue, it is **pramana** (*i.e.*, a valid cognizer), because it **is a consciousness** that is newly **non-deceptive**.

The definition of a valid cognizer is: a consciousness or knower that is newly non-deceptive. As mentioned above, 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' refers to an awareness that newly realizes its main object.

Therefore, the subject, a consciousness that is newly non-deceptive with regard to blue, it is a valid cognizer because it is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive'. It is newly non-deceptive with regard to blue because it newly realizes its main object, blue.

[Someone:] If a consciousness is a valid cognizer, it follows that it is pointless to present the definition of a valid cognizer in the commentaries, because when a self-knower perceives a consciousness, it also perceives the non-deceptiveness that is simultaneous and of one substantial entity with [the consciousness].

The argument presented here mentions a type of awareness called "self-knower". Followers of the Sautrantika, Chittamatra, and Yogachara-Svatantrika schools of Buddhism propound the existence of self-knowers, and since the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* is presented from the point of view of the Sautrantika Following Reasoning, self-knowers are asserted here.

According to Buddhist philosophers who accept self-knowers, there are two types of consciousness: (a) other-knowers and (b) self-knowers.

An other-knower is an awareness that is "directed outwards" and perceives phenomena other than a consciousness that is of one nature with itself. Examples are the five sense direct perceivers and conceptual consciousnesses.



A self-knower is a mental consciousness that directly perceives an awareness that is of one nature with itself. Examples of self-knowers are a self-knower that perceives an eye consciousness apprehending a tree, a self-knower that perceives an ear consciousness apprehending a song, a self-knower that perceives an inferential cognizer realizing selflessness, and so forth.

All awarenesses have a self-knower. That self-knower is simultaneous and of one substantial entity or of one nature with the awareness it perceives. The self-knower is simultaneous with the awareness it perceives, for the self-knower and the awareness it perceives arise and go out of existence simultaneously. Also, they are of one substantial entity or of one nature because the self-knower and the awareness it perceives are different aspects of the same consciousness. This means that one part of the awareness (the other-knower) is "directed outwards", for it apprehends phenomena such as shapes, colours, sounds, etc., while the other part (the self-knower) is "directed inwards" and perceives the other-knower.

The self-knower of an eye consciousness apprehending a tree, for instance, is simultaneous and of one substantial entity with the eye consciousness apprehending the tree. Unlike the sense consciousness it perceives, it is not a sense consciousness but a mental direct perceiver that perceives *the eye consciousness apprehending the tree*. Therefore, the self-knower of the eye consciousness apprehending the tree is a mental consciousness that is a direct perceiver, for it directly realizes its main object, the *eye consciousness apprehending the tree*. It is not self-awareness or introspection and plays only a small role in spiritual practice.

Likewise, the conceptual consciousness realizing selflessness has a self-knower that is simultaneous and of one substantial entity or of one nature with the conceptual consciousness realizing selflessness. That self-knower is a mental direct perceiver that directly realizes its main object, the conceptual consciousness realizing selflessness.

The reason for asserting self-knowers is to explain the memory of perception. When our eye consciousness has perceived a tree, later on we are able to remember the tree. The memory of the tree is possible owing to our eye consciousness having previously seen the tree.

But not only are we able to remember the tree, we are also able to remember that we *saw* the tree. That memory is the result of the self-knower that perceived the eye consciousness apprehending the tree. Thus, self-knowers are responsible for the memory of *perceiving* something.

The analogy used for a self-knower is a lamp that illuminates itself (self-knower) while it also illuminates other phenomena (other-knower).

Returning to the argument presented here: it concerns self-knowers that perceive valid cognizers (since every valid cognizer has a self-knower that perceives it). When a self-knower perceiving a valid cognizer realizes its main object — the valid cognizer — it also realizes the *non-deceptiveness* of the valid cognizer that is simultaneous and of one substantial entity with the self-knower, because it realizes the valid cognizer that is simultaneous and of one substantial entity with the self-knower. It realizes the non-deceptiveness of the valid cognizer because it realizes the defining functions (or characteristics) of that valid cognizer. Therefore, the self-knower realizes the definition of the valid cognizer, *i.e.*, it realizes 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive'.

This is why the opponent argues that it is not necessary to posit the definition of a valid cognizer in the commentaries of the *Pramana* literature, for everyone already *knows* the definition of a valid cognizer. Everyone knows the definition of a valid cognizer because many of our awarenesses are valid cognizers, and since each of those valid cognizers has its own self-knower, every one of those self-knowers realizes the defining functions of the valid cognizer it perceives. Since the self-knower realizes the defining functions of the valid cognizer it perceives, it also realizes the definition of the valid cognizer it perceives

(i.e., it realizes “a knower that is newly non-deceptive”). Thus, many of our self-knowers have realized the definition of a valid cognizer, which is why we already know the definition of a valid cognizer.

[Dharmakīrti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

[If] *being able to perform a function abides:*  
*Non-deceptive....*

[Response:] Regarding the subject, objects of knowledge, it does not follow that [a self-knower] fully realizes [that the valid cognizer the self-knower perceives] is non-deceptive merely by experiencing the nature [of that valid cognizer], because if **being able to perform the functions** of [for instance] cooking, scorching, etc., **abides** the way it is comprehended [by a valid cognizer apprehending a fire, that valid cognizer] is **non-deceptive** with regard to these functions. However, there is no certainty [that the self-knower perceiving the valid cognizer apprehending the fire realizes that the valid cognizer apprehending the fire is non-deceptive] merely by experiencing the nature [of that valid cognizer].

Our own system’s response to the argument above is that in general, a valid cognizer realizing fire is non-deceptive with respect to the defining functions the fire is able to perform, such as cooking, scorching, etc. Likewise, the self-knower that perceives that valid cognizer realizing fire is non-deceptive with regard to the defining functions of that valid cognizer, and thus with regard to the definition of the valid cognizer.

However, there are some exceptions, for there are self-knowers that realize the general nature of a valid cognizer without realizing that valid cognizer completely with its defining functions, to the extent of being able to identify it as a valid cognizer and therefore as non-deceptive.

For example, followers of the non-Buddhist Lokayata system only assert the existence of *direct* valid cognizers; they do not assert the existence of *inferential* valid cognizers, although inferential valid cognizers do arise in their mental continuum. Followers of the Lokayata system do not assert the existence of inferential valid cognizers, for they contend that only direct perceivers are able to realize an object; they do not accept that it is possible to realize an object in dependence on correct reasons.

When an inferential valid cognizer realizing the presence of fire on a mountain pass arises in the continuum of a follower of the Lokayata, the inferential valid cognizer is non-deceptive with regard to the fire, i.e., it realizes the fire. The inferential valid cognizer also realizes the fire’s defining functions of, for instance, cooking, scorching, etc. Therefore, the inferential valid cognizer is non-deceptive with regard to these functions.

Furthermore, the self-knower that perceives the inferential valid cognizer realizes the general nature of that valid cognizer, for it realizes the *awareness* apprehending the presence of fire on the mountain pass.

However, since a follower of the Lokayata system takes the position that there are no inferential valid cognizers, the self-knower of his inferential valid cognizer does not realize the *inferential valid cognizer* apprehending the presence of fire on the mountain pass. As the self-knower does not realize the *inferential valid cognizer* apprehending the presence of fire on the mountain pass, it does not realize the defining functions (and thus the definition) of that inferential valid cognizer. This means that it does not realize the determinative knower that in dependence on its basis, a correct sign, is newly *non-deceptive* with regard to its object of comprehension, a hidden phenomenon<sup>5</sup> (i.e., the presence of fire on the mountain pass).

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<sup>5</sup> The definition of an *inferential valid cognizer* is: A determinative knower that in dependence on its basis, a correct sign, is newly non-deceptive with regard to its object of comprehension, a hidden phenomenon.

Therefore, the self-knower of that inferential valid cognizer perceives or realizes the general nature of that inferential valid cognizer (*i.e.*, it realizes the *consciousness* apprehending the presence of fire on the mountain pass), but it does not realize that the inferential valid cognizer is non-deceptive with regard to the presence of fire on the mountain pass.

This example illustrates that it is for the sake of those who, on account of holding wrong views, etc., are unable to identify a valid cognizer; that the definition of a valid cognizer is provided in the commentaries of the *Pramana* literature.

In brief, under this outline Gyaltsab Je introduces the definition of a valid cognizer, in particular the aspect of the definition of being “non-deceptive” ( “*A valid cognizer is a non-deceptive awareness*”).

An awareness is non-deceptive with regard to a particular object because it realizes the defining functions that object is able to perform. For instance, fire is able to perform the functions of cooking, scorching, etc. Hence, an inferential valid cognizer that realizes fire on a mountain pass is non-deceptive with regard to the defining functions of fire (“[If] *being able to perform a function abides: / Non-deceptive ...*”).

But even though, in general, a consciousness perceiving fire is non-deceptive with regard to the fire and the defining functions of fire, and the self-knower of a valid cognizer is non-deceptive with regard to the valid cognizer and the defining functions of the valid cognizer (*i.e.*, it realizes that the valid cognizer is non-deceptive, etc.), nonetheless, owing to various misperceptions, it is necessary to posit the definition of a valid cognizer in the *Pramana* literature.

One of the qualities of a valid cognizer is that it is non-deceptive with regard to the defining functions of its main object. By being non-deceptive with regard to the defining functions of its main object, a valid cognizer enables the person in whose continuum it arises to obtain a desired object.

For instance, a valid cognizer realizing a camp fire, arising in the continuum of a person who feels cold, enables that person to seek out the fire and warm himself. Likewise a valid cognizer realizing water, arising in the continuum of a person who is thirsty, enables that person to quench his thirst.

On the other hand, a wrong consciousness that wrongly perceives, for instance, a mirage of water to be water does not enable the person to obtain the water.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the definition of a valid cognizer?
2. What is an example of a valid cognizer?
3. What is the meaning of being non-deceptive?
4. What is the meaning of being newly non-deceptive?
5. What is a self-knower?
6. What does a self-knower realize?
7. Why is a self-knower simultaneous and of one substantial entity with the awareness it perceives?
8. What is an other-knower?
9. Why does an opponent argue that it is not necessary to posit the definition of a valid cognizer in the *Pramana* commentaries?

10. What is the response to the argument that it is not necessary to posit the definition of a valid cognizer in the *Pramana* commentaries?
11. What type of valid cognizer do the followers of the Lokayata system assert and what type of valid cognizer do they not assert?

**DISPELLING [OBJECTION OF] NON-PERVASION (*i.e.*, REFUTING OBJECTION THAT THE DEFINITION OF A VALID COGNIZER IS TOO NARROW)**

[Someone:] Since non-deceptiveness with regard to function has the meaning of obtaining an object, and since no one can obtain a sound, etc., an auditory consciousness does not satisfy the definition.

Here someone objects to Dharmakirti's definition of a valid cognizer, arguing that the definition is too narrow. The definition is too narrow because not all valid cognizers satisfy the definition. Not all valid cognizers satisfy the definition because, according to the opponent, whatever is a valid cognizer is not necessarily 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive'. Whatever is a valid cognizer is not necessarily 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' because whatever is a valid cognizer is *not* necessarily non-deceptive. As an example of an awareness that is a valid cognizer but *not* non-deceptive, the opponent cites a valid cognizer that is an auditory consciousness (*e.g.*, an ear consciousness apprehending an explanation by another person).

The opponent asserts that an auditory consciousness is *not* non-deceptive because an auditory consciousness is *not* non-deceptive with regard to the functions of its main object, sound. An auditory consciousness is *not* non-deceptive with regard to the functions of its main object, sound, because an auditory consciousness does not enable the person in whose continuum the auditory consciousness arises to obtain the sound.

This argument arises from the opponent's position that a valid cognizer is non-deceptive with regard to the functions of an object only if it enables the person in whose continuum the valid cognizer arises to obtain the object.

For instance, an eye consciousness realizing a book (and thus the functions of the book) is non-deceptive with regard to the functions of the book because the eye consciousness enables the person in whose continuum the eye consciousness arises to obtain or get the book.

However, sound or a flash of lightning are objects one cannot obtain, for they are not tangible and only exist for a short time. Therefore, the opponent holds that an ear consciousness realizing the words of another person and an eye consciousness realizing a flash of lightning are *not* non-deceptive. They are *not* non-deceptive because they are *not* non-deceptive with regard to the functions of their main object. They are *not* non-deceptive with regard to the functions of their main objects (the words of the other person and the flash of lightning), because the person in whose continuum these awarenesses arise is unable to obtain the words and the flash of lightning.

In short, even though the opponent contends that the first moment of an ear consciousness realizing the words of another person and the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing a flash of lightning are both valid cognizers (since they are awarenesses that newly realize their main object) he asserts that they are not 'knowers that are newly *non-deceptive*' and, therefore, do not satisfy Dharmakirti's definition of a valid cognizer.

Hence, the opponent argues that Dharmakirti's definition is too narrow, for it does not include all valid cognizers.<sup>6</sup>

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

... arisen from sound, too  
Because it indicates [its] desired [object]. (1)

[Response:] Regarding the subject, an auditory consciousness that has **arisen from** its apprehended object, **sound**, it is free from the fault of not being suitable to [satisfy the definition of] a valid cognizer, **because it** is a consciousness that newly **indicates** (*i.e.*, realizes) its **desired** object of comprehension. The word "**too**" ("*... arisen from sound, too*") includes a valid cognizer that sees a flash of lightning, and so on.

In response to the opponent's argument, our own system cites, 'an auditory consciousness that has arisen from its *apprehended object*, sound'. 'An auditory consciousness that has arisen from its *apprehended object*, sound' refers to an ear consciousness apprehending sound, such as, for instance, the first moment of an ear consciousness perceiving the words of another person.<sup>7</sup>

According to our own system, the subject, the first moment of an auditory consciousness that has arisen from its apprehended object, sound, is free from the fault of not being suitable to satisfy Dharmakirti's definition of a valid cognizer, because it is non-deceptive with regard to the functions of its main object. It is non-deceptive with regard to the functions of its main object because it is a consciousness that newly indicates, *i.e.*, realizes its desired object of comprehension.

In other words, an auditory consciousness, such as the first moment of an ear consciousness perceiving the words of another person, is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' because it newly understands its desired object of comprehension, the words of the other person. The words of the other person are the desired object of comprehension of that ear consciousness because they are the main object the ear

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<sup>6</sup> The opponent's view is similar to the view of some Indian Buddhist scholars, such as Dharmakirti's disciple Shakyabodhi, who hold that an eye consciousness that mistakenly perceives the glow of a jewel to be an actual jewel, and an eye consciousness that perceives a white conch shell to be a yellow conch shell are valid cognizers, for they enable the person in whose continuum these two eye consciousnesses arise to obtain the jewel and the conch shell. Hence according to these scholars, there is a common locus between a valid cognizer and a wrong consciousness (*i.e.*, an awareness that is mistaken with regard to its main object).

According to our own system this is not correct, for there is no common locus between a valid cognizer and an awareness that is mistaken with regard to its main object, and thus an eye consciousness perceiving the glow of a jewel to be an actual jewel and an eye consciousness perceiving a yellow conch shell are not accepted to be valid cognizers.

However, this assertion by our own system gives rise to the following debate: Regarding the subject, the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing the moon, it follows that it is not a valid cognizer, because it is a wrong consciousness. It is a wrong consciousness because it is an awareness that is mistaken with regard to its main object, the moon. Regarding the subject, the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing the moon, it follows that it is an awareness that is mistaken with regard to its main object, the moon, because it perceives a perfectly round and small moon, while in reality the moon is neither perfectly round nor small.

<sup>7</sup> An ear consciousness perceiving the words of another person is an auditory consciousness that has arisen from its *apprehended object*, sound, because it is an auditory consciousness that has arisen from its *apprehended object*, the words of another person. The words of the other person are the *apprehended object* of that ear consciousness because the words of the other person are the *observed object condition* of that ear consciousness. The *apprehended object* (*gzung don*) of an awareness and the *observed object condition* (*dmigs skyen*) of an awareness are equivalent (*i.e.*, they are different terms for the same referent object).

The *observed object condition* of an awareness refers to an object that is both (1) the direct (*i.e.*, immediately preceding) cause that gives rise to the awareness and (2) the appearing object of that awareness.

In the case of the ear consciousness perceiving the words of another person, the words of the other person are the *observed object condition* of the ear consciousness because they are (1) the direct (*i.e.*, immediately preceding) cause that gives rise to the ear consciousness and (2) the appearing object of that ear consciousness.

consciousness comprehends or realizes, and because the person in whose continuum the ear consciousness arises wants to hear those words.

Therefore, in order for an awareness to be non-deceptive with regard to its main object, the person in whose continuum the awareness arises does not have to be able to obtain the object; it is sufficient for the awareness to realize the object that the person, in whose continuum the awareness arises, wants to hear.

In the *Pramanavarttika*, the word “too” in the line, “... arisen from sound, too” includes, for instance, the first moment of an eye consciousness perceiving a flash of lightning. As before, even though the person in whose continuum the eye consciousness arises is unable to obtain the flash of lightning, the eye consciousness is nonetheless ‘a knower that is newly non-deceptive’ because it newly realizes its desired object of comprehension, the flash of lightning.

[Someone:] Since the shastras are *pramana* with regard to all objects of knowledge, one is able to accomplish one’s desired goals. What, then, is the use of establishing that the Muni is a *valid cognizer* [being]?

As mentioned before, in a Buddhist context, *pramana* is a Sanskrit term that is usually translated as “valid cognizer”. However, since this second opponent’s argument reflects the view of the non-Buddhist Vedanta system, this translation is not appropriate.

Traditional Vedanta considers scriptural evidence as the most authentic means of knowledge, while direct perception and inferential cognition are considered to be subordinate. According to the Vedantists, the shastras, *i.e.*, the spiritual treatises such as the Vedas, are *pramana* with regard to all objects of knowledge, for they are the most authentic and valid source of knowledge.

Along the same lines, the opponent argues here that it is not necessary to establish that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being*, since the Buddhist shastras or treatises are the most valid source of knowledge and therefore *pramana*. Hence, by understanding that high rebirths and definite good (*i.e.*, liberation or Buddhahood) were taught in the Buddhist treatises, one is able to realize and eventually attain high rebirths, liberation or Buddhahood.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*The objects the speaker does [wish to express],  
Some entity is fully clear to the awareness,  
[Expressive] sound with regard to those is pramana,  
Not a cause-possessing [reason] of the very entities. (2)*

[Response:] It follows that the expressive sounds (*i.e.*, the words) of the treatises, etc., are **not** a correct **cause-possessing** resultant reason that brings forth understanding of high rebirths, definite good, and so forth, which are the **very entities** expressed [by those words], because expressive **sound with regard to those** (high rebirths and definite good) **is pramana**, that is, a correct reason, which — [based on the syllogism’s subject that is] the basis of the property of the subject — brings forth understanding in the listener’s **awareness of some fully clear entity** [with regard to] **the objects** of engagement the **speaker does** wish to express.

Alternatively, the meaning of the former text [passage] can be applied so as to accord with the latter [valid cognizer that] has arisen from sound.

Our own system's response to the opponent's argument is that it is not sufficient to understand that high rebirths, etc., are taught in the Buddhist treatises<sup>8</sup>, because the expressive sounds, *i.e.*, the words of the treatises that teach high rebirths, liberation and Buddhahood, cannot be cited as a correct reason that establishes the existence of high rebirths, liberation and Buddhahood. This is because, in general, a word cannot be cited as a correct reason in order to establish the object or entity expressed by the word.

For instance, the word "table" expresses table but it does not establish the existence of a table. Therefore, the following is an incorrect syllogism:

*Regarding the subject, in a classroom in which someone utters the word "table", there is a table because there is the word "table".*

This is an incorrect syllogism because the reason of the syllogism (the word "table") is neither of one nature with the predicate of the syllogism (table) nor the result of that predicate.

Please note that one of the criteria of a correct syllogism is that the reason of the syllogism must either be of one nature with the predicate of the syllogism or the result of that predicate. If the reason does not relate to the predicate by way of being of one nature with it or by way of being its result, the reason cannot logically establish the predicate. Hence, the word "table" cannot logically establish a table.

Similarly, the following is an incorrect syllogism:

*Regarding the subject, high rebirths and definite good, they exist, because the treatises that teach them exist.*

The words of the Buddhist treatises that teach high rebirths and definite good are neither of one nature with high rebirths and definite good nor their result. Therefore, those treatises cannot be cited as a correct reason that establishes the existence of high rebirths and definite good. In other words, it is not possible to establish high rebirths, liberation, etc., by arguing that they exist because they are taught in the Buddhist scriptures.

Gyaltsab Je formulates this response in his *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* by saying, "It follows that the expressive sounds (*i.e.*, the words) of the treatises, etc., are **not** a correct **cause-possessing** resultant reason that brings forth understanding of high rebirths, definite good, and so forth, which are the **very entities** expressed [by those words]" (p. 35).

This means that the words of the treatises that teach high rebirths, etc., are not a correct resultant reason that establishes the actual entities that are expressed by these words, namely high rebirths, definite good, etc.

Here a 'cause-possessing resultant reason' is a specific type of reason, called a "resultant reason". A resultant reason refers to the reason of a syllogism that is the result of the predicate of that same syllogism.<sup>9</sup>

As mentioned above, for a reason to be the correct reason of a syllogism it must either be of one nature with the syllogism's predicate or the result of that predicate. Here, by saying that the words of the treatises are not a 'cause-possessing resultant reason' that establishes the objects expressed by the words, Gyaltsab Je states, explicitly, that the

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<sup>8</sup> A Buddhist treatise is a reliable commentary on the Buddhist teachings. Also, please note that sutras, treatises, etc., refer to the spoken words they contain — the expressive sounds — and not to the printed pages.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, smoke is a resultant reason of the following syllogism:

*Regarding the subject, on a smoky mountain pass, there is fire because there is smoke.*

Smoke is the resultant reason of that syllogism because it is the result of the predicate of that syllogism, fire.

words of the treatises are not the result of the objects they express and, implicitly, that they are not of one nature with the objects they express.

Our own system then continues the response to the opponent's argument by saying that even though expressive sounds cannot serve as a correct reason that establishes the objects expressed by those words, expressive sounds serve as a correct reason that establishes that the speaker of the expressive sounds has the motivation to say those words.

Therefore, the following is considered to be a correct syllogism:

*Regarding the subject, the expressive sound "table" that is uttered by John, its speaker (i.e., John) has the motivation to say "table", because it is the expressive sound "table".*

In this case, the reason, the expressive sound "table", is that syllogism's correct reason because it is a correct resultant reason that establishes that the speaker of the expressive sound "table" has the motivation to say "table".

The expressive sound "table" is the *resultant* reason of that syllogism because it is the result of the predicate, i.e., the speaker's motivation to say "table". The expressive sound "table" is the result of the speaker's motivation to say "table" because an expressive sound is necessarily preceded by its cause, the speaker's motivation to express the sound.

Similarly, the following is considered to be a correct syllogism:

*Regarding the subject, a Buddhist treatise that teaches high rebirths, definite good, etc., its speaker has the motivation to set forth high rebirths, definite good, etc., because it is expressive sound that presents high rebirths, definite good, etc.*

As before, the reason of the syllogism (i.e., expressive sound that sets forth high rebirths, definite good, etc.) is a correct resultant reason that establishes that the speaker of the treatise has the motivation to set forth high rebirths, definite good, etc.

This is essentially what Gyalsab Je explains when he says, "expressive **sound with regard to those** (high rebirths and definite good) **is *pramana***, that is, a correct reason, which — [based on the syllogism's subject that is] the basis of the property of the subject — brings forth understanding in the listener's **awareness of some fully clear entity** [with regard to] **the objects** of engagement the **speaker does** wish to express" (p. 35).

In other words, Gyalsab Je says that expressive sound that sets forth high rebirths, definite good, and so forth, is *pramana*, i.e., a correct reason which — based on the syllogism's subject, i.e., a Buddhist treatise that teaches high rebirths, definite good, etc., — establishes in the mind of the person listening to the treatise some fully clear entity, i.e., the speakers' motivation with regard to the objects of engagement (i.e., high rebirths, definite good, etc.) that the speaker wishes to express.

Here "*pramana*" means a correct reason; "the basis of the property of the subject" refers to the subject of the syllogism; and "some fully clear entity with regard to the objects of engagement that the speaker does wish to express" refers to the speaker's motivation to express high rebirths, definite good, etc.

However, some scholars disagree with the two syllogisms above, since they hold that expressive sound is *not* necessarily preceded by the speaker's motivation to express the sound. As an example, they cite a person who intends to say "chair" but says "table" by mistake. In this case, the expressive sound "table" is not preceded by the motivation to say "table", but by the motivation to say "chair".

Therefore, according to these scholars: whatever is the expressive sound "table" is not necessarily preceded by its cause, the speaker's motivation to say "table"; and whatever is expressive sound that sets forth high rebirths, definite good, etc., is not necessarily preceded by the speaker's motivation to present high rebirths, etc. Instead, these scholars



assert that only expressive sound that is *free from the five conditions* is necessarily preceded by the speaker's motivation to express the sound.

The *five conditions* are: (1) saying something owing to being mentally ill, (2) saying something while being asleep, (3) saying something out of familiarity, (4) repeating something after someone, and (5) saying something by mistake.

Thus, according to these scholars, the following are correct syllogisms:

*Regarding the subject, the expressive sound "table" that is uttered by John and is free from the five conditions, its speaker has the motivation to say "table", because it is the expressive sound "table" that is free from the five conditions.*

and:

*Regarding the subject, a Buddhist treatise that teaches high rebirths, definite good, etc., its speaker has the motivation to set forth high rebirths, definite good, etc., because it is expressive sound presenting high rebirths, definite good, etc., which is free from the five conditions.*

Some scholars argue that whatever is expressive sound that is free from the five conditions is not necessarily preceded by the motivation to express the sound, because the words of the Buddha are expressive sounds that are free from the five conditions but they are not preceded by the Buddha's motivation to speak these words. They are not preceded by the Buddha's motivation to speak these words because a motivation is necessarily a conceptual consciousness whereas a Buddha has overcome all conceptual consciousnesses.

In reply to this argument, other scholars allege either that the words of the Buddha are not expressive sounds or that a motivation is not necessarily a conceptual consciousness.

However, these are only minor disagreements which, although often debated, do not contradict our own system's above-mentioned response to the opponent who asserts that it is not necessary to establish that the Buddha is a *valid cognizer being* because Buddhist treatises are *pramana*.

With this response, our own system further establishes that there is: a valid cognizer that has arisen from the correct reason, sound. An example of this type of valid cognizer is the inferential valid cognizer realizing the main 'object to be established' (the *probandum*) of the following syllogism:

*Regarding the subject, a Buddhist treatise that teaches high rebirths, etc., its speaker has the motivation to set forth high rebirths, etc., because it is expressive sound presenting high rebirths, etc.*

In other words, an example of 'a valid cognizer that has arisen from the correct reason, sound' is the inferential valid cognizer realizing that "the speaker of a Buddhist treatise which teaches high rebirths, etc., has the motivation to set forth high rebirths, etc."

That inferential valid cognizer is 'a valid cognizer that has arisen from the correct reason, sound' because it is an inferential valid cognizer that has arisen from its cause, the correct reason of the above-mentioned syllogism, "expressive *sound* presenting high rebirths, etc."

"Expressive sound presenting high rebirths, etc." is the cause of that valid cognizer, because the valid cognizer has come to realize that "the speaker of a Buddhist treatise which teaches high rebirths, etc., has the motivation to set forth high rebirths, etc." in dependence on contemplating the correct reason, "expressive sound presenting high rebirths, etc."

Consequently, according to our own system, there are two types of valid cognizer that have arisen from sound: (1) a valid cognizer that has arisen from the *apprehended object*, sound; and (2) a valid cognizer that has arisen from the *correct reason*, sound.

The first type of valid cognizer, '(1) a valid cognizer that has arisen from the *apprehended object*, sound' is a *direct* valid cognizer (*i.e.*, a valid cognizer that is a direct perceiver), which is explained above (footnote 7, p. 34). An example of such a valid direct perceiver is the above-mentioned auditory consciousness perceiving the words of another person (p. 34).

Above our own system explained that even though the person in whose continuum such an auditory consciousness arises is unable to obtain the words of the other person, the ear consciousness is, nonetheless, 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' because it newly realizes its desired object of comprehension, the words of the other person.

Alternatively, that same explanation can also be applied to: '(2) a valid cognizer that has arisen from the *correct reason*, sound'.

Hence, Gyaltsab Je says: "Alternatively, the meaning of the former text [passage] can be applied so as to accord with the latter [valid cognizer that] has arisen from sound."

The "former text [passage]" here refers to the following one and a half lines from the *Pramanavarttika*: "... arisen from sound, too / Because it indicates [its] desired [object]."

The "latter [valid cognizer that] has arisen from sound" refers to the latter of the two types of valid cognizers, *i.e.*, '(2) a valid cognizer that has arisen from the *correct reason*, sound'.

The way the former text passage can be applied to the "latter [valid cognizer that] has arisen from sound" is as follows:

Regarding the subject, an inferential valid cognizer that has **arisen from** the correct reason, **sound** (*e.g.*, the above-mentioned inferential valid cognizer realizing that 'the speaker of a Buddhist treatise which teaches high rebirths, etc., has the motivation to set forth high rebirths, etc.'), it is free from the fault of not being suitable to satisfy the definition of a valid cognizer, because even though the person in whose continuum the valid cognizer arises is unable to obtain the valid cognizer's object of comprehension ('the speaker's motivation to set forth high rebirths, etc.'), nonetheless, the valid cognizer is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' **because it** newly **indicates**, *i.e.*, **realizes** its **desired** object of comprehension.

The object of comprehension is the valid cognizer's *desired* object because it is the object that the person (in whose continuum the valid cognizer arises) wants to realize.

In brief, under this heading Gyaltsab Je cites an opponent who argues that 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' does not qualify as the definition of a valid cognizer because the definition is too narrow. It is too narrow because, according to this opponent, the meaning of being non-deceptive with regard to the functions of an object is *being able to obtain the object*. Therefore, a valid cognizer that has arisen from sound, for instance, is *not* non-deceptive because it is not possible to obtain sound.

Our own system's response to this debate is that: like a valid cognizer realizing a flash of lightning, '(1) a valid cognizer that has arisen from the *apprehended object*, sound' or '(2) a valid cognizer that has arisen from the *correct reason*, sound' is a knower that is newly non-deceptive because it indicates, *i.e.*, realizes, its desired object ("... arisen from sound, too / Because it indicates [its] desired [object]").

In particular, '(2) a valid cognizer that has arisen from the *correct reason*, sound' may be able to realize — in dependence on expressive sound — the motivation to utter some words in the continuum of another person who speaks those words. This is because expressive sound, such as a Buddhist treatise, is *pramana* (*i.e.*, a correct proof or reason) that brings forth understanding in the awareness of the person listening to the treatise of some fully clear entity, *i.e.*, of the motivation of the treatise's speaker, with regard to the objects the speaker wishes to express.

In other words, expressive sound is a correct reason that establishes (for the person listening to the treatise) the speaker's motivation to express whatever the treatise teaches. (*"The objects the speaker does [wish to express], / Some entity is fully clear to the awareness, / [Expressive] sound with regard to those is pramana"*)

However, a Buddhist treatise that teaches high rebirths, etc., is not a correct cause-possessing, i.e., resultant reason that establishes the very entities it expresses, namely high rebirths, etc., (*"Not a cause-possessing [reason] of the very entities."*)

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. According to the first opponent (of this outline), what is the meaning of non-deceptive?
2. How does the opponent's assertion regarding the meaning of non-deceptive lead him to claim that our own system's definition of a valid cognizer is too narrow?
3. How does our own system refute the opponent's claim that our own system's definition is too narrow?
4. What are the two types of valid cognizers that have arisen from sound? Please think of an example for each of them? In what way have the two types arisen from sound?
5. In the *Pramanavartika*, what awareness does the word "too" in the line, "... arisen from sound, too" include?
6. What is the assertion of the second opponent (of this outline), which reflects the view of the non-Buddhist Vedanta system?
7. What is our own system's response to the second opponent?
8. Why is expressive sound not able to serve as a correct reason that establishes what it (i.e., the expressive sound) expresses?
9. Expressive sound is a correct reason of what syllogism? In other words, of what *object that is to be established* (the *probandum*) does expressive sound serve as a correct reason? What is a resultant reason?
10. Is expressive sound necessarily preceded by the motivation to express the sound?
11. What is the meaning of the following sentence from the *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation*, "Alternatively, the meaning of the former text [passage] can be applied so as to accord with the latter [valid cognizer that] has arisen from sound."

## **DISPELLING [THE VIEW OF A] BROAD PERVASION (*i.e.*, REFUTING OBJECTION THAT THE DEFINITION IS TOO BROAD)**

[Someone:] It follows that a subsequent cognizer is also *pramana* (*i.e.*, a valid cognizer), because it has non-deceptiveness.

Here someone objects to Dharmakirti's definition of *pramana*, *i.e.*, a valid cognizer, arguing that the definition is too broad. Since Dharmakirti previously only identified a valid cognizer's attribute of being 'non-deceptive' without explicitly mentioning that a valid cognizer must be *newly* non-deceptive [*"Pramana is a non-deceptive consciousness"*], the opponent mistakenly believes that the definition of a valid cognizer is 'a knower that is non-deceptive'. However, 'a knower that is non-deceptive' is too broad to serve as the definition of a valid cognizer, for whatever is 'a knower that is non-deceptive' is not necessarily a valid cognizer. In other words, not only valid cognizers but all awarenesses that realize their objects are knowers that are non-deceptive.

For instance, a subsequent cognizer is 'a knower that is non-deceptive'. However, it is not a valid cognizer because it does not *newly* realize its object. A subsequent cognizer does not newly realize its object because it realizes its object in *dependence on or through the power* of a former valid cognizer that realized the same object. A subsequent cognizer realizes its object through the power of a former valid cognizer because a subsequent cognizer is induced by that valid cognizer. Therefore, a subsequent cognizer is defined as: 'a knower that is not a valid cognizer and that realizes what has already been realized by a former valid cognizer inducing it'.

A subsequent cognizer can be a sense direct perceiver, a mental direct perceiver or a conceptual consciousness.

Examples of a subsequent cognizer that is a sense direct perceiver are the second moment of an eye consciousness realizing a table, the third moment of an ear consciousness realizing the sound of water, and so forth. The second moment of an eye consciousness realizing a table is a subsequent cognizer because it realizes a table that has already been realized by the *first moment* of the eye consciousness (realizing a table) which induced the second moment of the eye consciousness. Likewise, the third moment of an ear consciousness realizing the sound of water is a subsequent cognizer because it realizes the sound of water that has already been realized by the *first moment* of the ear consciousness (realizing the sound of water) which induced the (second and) third moment.

Examples of a subsequent cognizer that is a mental direct perceiver are the second moment of a self-knower realizing a tongue consciousness apprehending a sandwich, the fourth moment of a yogic direct perceiver realizing that the five aggregates are in the nature of suffering, and so on. They are subsequent cognizers because they realize objects (*i.e.*, a tongue consciousness apprehending a sandwich and that the five aggregates are in the nature of suffering) that have already been realized by a former valid cognizer (the *first moment* of the self-knower realizing the tongue consciousness apprehending a sandwich and the *first moment* of the yogic direct perceiver realizing that the five aggregates are in the nature of suffering) which induced the subsequent cognizers.

Examples of a subsequent cognizer that is a conceptual consciousness are the second moment of an inferential cognizer realizing a sprout's impermanence, a memory consciousness realizing the smell of perfume, etc. The second moment of an inferential cognizer realizing a sprout's impermanence is a subsequent cognizer because it realizes the sprout's impermanence that has previously been realized by the *first moment* of the inferential cognizer (realizing the sprout's impermanence) which induced the second moment. Similarly, a memory consciousness realizing the smell of perfume is a subsequent cognizer because it realizes the smell of perfume that has previously been realized by a former moment of a valid cognizer realizing the smell of perfume (for

instance, the first moment of a nose consciousness realizing the smell of perfume) which induced the memory.

Returning to the argument presented here: the opponent contends that it is not correct to assert that ‘a knower that is non-deceptive’ is the definition of a valid cognizer, for that definition includes awarenesses other than valid cognizers.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*Since it apprehends the [already] apprehended, a conventional [awareness]  
Is not accepted [to be pramana] ....*

[Response:] Regarding the subject, **a conventional** awareness, a memory, a subsequent cognizer, **it is not accepted** to be *pramana* (i.e., a valid cognizer), because **it** is a consciousness that through memory **apprehends** again an entity already **apprehended** and realized by a former *pramana* that induced [the subsequent cognizer] and has not deteriorated.

Our own system’s response is that a subsequent cognizer, such as a memory consciousness which is a conventional awareness, is not a valid cognizer because it is not ‘a knower that is *newly* non-deceptive’. It is not *newly* non-deceptive because it does not *newly* realize its object. A memory consciousness does not *newly* realize its object because through memory it realizes an entity, i.e., an object that has already been realized by a former valid cognizer that induced the memory and has not deteriorated. The phrase “has not deteriorated” indicates that a subsequent cognizer such as a memory consciousness can only arise as long as the valid cognizer that induced the subsequent cognizer has not deteriorated but lies dormant.

A ‘conventional awareness’ refers to a conceptual consciousness. Therefore, a memory consciousness is described as a ‘conventional awareness’ because it is a conceptual consciousness. The literal meaning of the Sanskrit and Tibetan terms for ‘conventional’ is ‘concealer’. According to the Sautrantika tenet system (which, as mentioned before, is the tenet system on which the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* is based), a concealer refers to a conceptual consciousness. A conceptual consciousness is a concealer because it does not apprehend its object directly but through the appearance of a generic image, and thus it ‘conceals’ the direct perception of its object.

Even though our own system does not explicitly explain here that ‘a knower that is non-deceptive’ is not asserted to be the definition of a valid cognizer, this is implied in the response.

In brief, under this heading Gyaltshab Je cites an opponent who wrongly believes the definition of a valid cognizer to be ‘a knower that is non-deceptive’. He therefore argues that the definition is too broad, for it also includes awarenesses that are not valid cognizers, such as subsequent cognizers.

Our own system’s response is that a conventional awareness, such as a memory consciousness that is a subsequent cognizer (which satisfies the definition which the opponent wrongly believes to be the definition of a valid cognizer), is not accepted to be *pramana*, i.e., a valid cognizer. It is not accepted to be a valid cognizer because it is a consciousness that through memory apprehends again an object that has already been apprehended by a former valid cognizer that induced the memory and has not deteriorated. (“*Since it apprehends the [already] apprehended, a conventional [awareness] / Is not accepted [to be pramana]*”).

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the definition of a valid cognizer according to our own system?
2. What is the definition of a valid cognizer according to the opponent of this outline?
3. What are subsequent cognizers?
4. What is the difference between a valid cognizer and a subsequent cognizer?
5. Why does the opponent believe that the definition of a valid cognizer is too broad?
6. How does our own system refute the opponent's claim that the definition of a valid cognizer is too broad?
7. What does it mean that a valid cognizer has not deteriorated but lies dormant?
8. What is a memory consciousness?
9. What is a conventional consciousness and why is it a concealer?

## THE INSTANCES [OF A VALID COGNIZER]

[Someone:] Since one obtains an entity in dependence on the sense powers, such as the eye [sense powers], and so forth, are [the sense powers] not *pramana* (i.e., valid cognizers)?

The opponent's assertion here reflects the view of the followers of the Vaibhashika tenet school (the Great Exposition School) who hold that the sense powers, such as the eye sense power, the ear sense power, the nose sense power, etc., perceive phenomena. Therefore, according to this opponent, sense powers that enable a person to obtain an object are *pramana* (i.e., valid cognizers).

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*...an awareness is that very pramana,  
Because it is the main [cause] regarding the engaging in  
Things that are to be adopted and discarded and, (3)  
Because if there is that, there is this,  
Since on account of an object having different aspects,  
There are different realizations by the awarenesses.*

[Response:] Regarding the subject, **an awareness** that is newly non-deceptive by way of taking on the aspect of its object, it is **that very pramana**, because it is a consciousness which mainly achieves (a) indirect and (b) direct results through *pramana* (i.e., valid cognition)

It achieves (a) indirect results through *pramana* **because it is the main cause regarding** a person's **engaging in** adopting and discarding **the things that are to be adopted and discarded**.

It (i.e., an awareness that is newly non-deceptive) achieves (b) direct results through *pramana*, **because if there is that** (valid cognition), **there is this** ability to uninterruptedly posit [other] *pramana* (i.e., valid cognizers) realizing their objects. This is the case **since, on account of** [the] **different aspects of an object** which are taken on by awarenesses that are able to newly stop superimpositions, one is able to posit **different realizations** [of the different aspects] of the object **by the awarenesses**.

Our own system's response to the opponent's assertion is that *only* an awareness that is newly non-deceptive, by way of taking on the aspect of its object, is that very *pramana*, i.e., a valid cognizer, because it is a consciousness that mainly achieves (a) indirect and (b) direct results through *pramana* (i.e., valid cognition).

An awareness that is newly non-deceptive 'takes on the aspect of its object' because its object appears to it. For instance, the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing a car: it is 'newly non-deceptive, by way of taking on the aspect of' the car, since the car appears to the eye consciousness when the eye consciousness newly realizes the car.

Here, our own system not only refutes the Vaibhashika assertion that there are sense powers which are valid cognizers but — by mentioning the fact that a valid cognizer newly realizes its object 'by way of taking on the aspect of its object' — also refutes another Vaibhashika assertion which is not held by any of the other Buddhist tenet systems. This assertion is that a sense consciousness does not take on the aspect of its object and that objects therefore do not appear to that awareness. Instead, followers of the Vaibhashika contend that a sense consciousness perceives its object nakedly, without taking on the aspect of the object.<sup>10</sup>

Followers of the other Buddhist tenet schools (Sautrantika, Chittamatra and Madhyamika) assert that even though an eye consciousness apprehending a car perceives the car directly without depending on the appearance of a generic image of the car, the eye consciousness does not perceive the car nakedly. It does not perceive the car nakedly since the eye consciousness takes on the aspect of the car, i.e., the car appears to the eye consciousness.

Returning to the reason cited by our own system why only an awareness that is newly non-deceptive (by way of taking on the aspect of the object) is a valid cognizer: only such an awareness is a valid cognizer because it is a consciousness that mainly achieves (a) indirect and (b) direct results through *pramana* (i.e., valid cognition).

A newly non-deceptive awareness is a consciousness that mainly achieves (a) indirect results through valid cognition, because a valid cognizer is the main cause of avoiding that which is to be discarded and embracing that which is to be adopted. In other words, it is mainly in reliance on correct understanding that we are able to accomplish both worldly goals (e.g., a good job) and spiritual goals (e.g., high rebirths and definite good), and avoid whatever may be in the way of achieving those goals. Having an incorrect understanding, on the other hand, is one of the main obstacles preventing us from accomplishing our aims.

A newly non-deceptive awareness is a consciousness that mainly achieves (b) direct results through valid cognition, because a valid cognizer may directly or "uninterruptedly" induce a series of other valid cognizers that enable a person to get a fuller understanding of an object. A valid cognizer may induce a series of other valid cognizers since any object possesses different aspects or characteristics (e.g., its impermanence, its effect on other phenomena) which, following upon a general comprehension of the object, may lead to the successive realization of those various characteristics.

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<sup>10</sup> Please see, Geshe Lhundup Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkin's *Cutting Through Appearances* (which contains an annotated translation of Koenchog Jigme Wangpo's *Precious Garland of Tenets*), p. 199.

Also, Jeffrey Hopkins' *Maps of the Profound: Jam-yang-shay-ba's Great Exposition of Buddhist and Non-Buddhist Views of the Nature of Reality* (a translation of root text with commentaries) [Snow Lion: New York, 2003], p. 237:

"Jam-yang-shay-ba's *Great Exposition of Tenets*: They assert that sense consciousnesses actually apprehend objects nakedly without [the object casting a representation or] aspect [of itself to the consciousness]. Sense consciousnesses are specified in order to eliminate the likes of conceptual consciousnesses [which operate through the medium of an image]. "Without the aspect" and "actually" are specified in consideration that they do not assert, as the Proponents of Sutra do, that a representation intervenes. Even minute particles are actually known."

On the other hand, if one misperceives an object, such a misperception is likely to give rise to further misperceptions. Hence, if instead of a valid cognizer, one generates a wrong consciousness, such a wrong consciousness may induce a series of other wrong consciousnesses.

Here, the word “uninterruptedly” means that a valid cognizer may induce a series of valid cognizers without the inducing valid cognizer and the series of valid cognizers (that are induced) being “interrupted” by an awareness that is unrelated to the realization of that valid cognizer. In other words, the series of different valid cognizers arises uninterruptedly soon after the inducing valid cognizer.

In brief, under this heading Gyalsab Je cites an opponent who, like the proponents of the Vaibhashika School, asserts that whatever is a valid cognizer is not necessarily an awareness, for there are sense powers that are valid cognizers.

Our own system’s response is that only an awareness that is newly non-deceptive (by way of taking on the aspect of its object) is that very *pramana* because it is a consciousness that mainly achieves (a) indirect and (b) direct results through *pramana*. (“... an awareness is that very *pramana*”).

An awareness that is newly non-deceptive (by way of taking on the aspect of its object) mainly achieves (a) indirect results through *pramana*, because it is the main cause of a person’s engaging in adopting and discarding the things that are to be adopted and discarded. (“*Because it is the main [cause] regarding the engaging in / Things that are to be adopted and discarded, ...*”).

Also, an awareness that is newly non-deceptive (by way of taking on the aspect of its object) mainly achieves (b) direct results through *pramana*, because if there is that valid cognition, there is an ability to directly or uninterruptedly induce other *pramana*. This is because the different aspects or characteristics of an object (which are taken on by awarenesses that can newly realize their objects) enable one to posit different realizations — by those awarenesses — of the object’s different aspects. (“*Because if there is that, there is this, / Since on account of an object having different aspects, / There are different realizations by the awarenesses.*”)

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the assertion of the opponent (of this outline)?
2. What is our own system’s response to the opponent’s assertion?
3. Which two assertions unique to the Vaibhashika (Great Exposition School) are refuted here?
4. What does it mean for an awareness “to take on the aspect of its object”?
5. What is the reason cited by our own system, why only an awareness that is newly non-deceptive (by way of taking on the aspect of the object) is a valid cognizer?
6. Why is a valid cognizer a consciousness that mainly achieves (a) indirect results through *pramana*?
7. Why is a valid cognizer a consciousness that mainly achieves (b) direct results through *pramana*?
8. What is the meaning of the word “uninterruptedly” here?



## ASCERTAINING THAT THE INSTANCES [SATISFY] THE DEFINITION

[Someone:] The definition of *pramana* — being newly non-deceptive — is ascertained either by (a) [each *pramana*, i.e., valid cognizer] itself or (b) in dependence on another, subsequent [*pramana*]. In the first case (a), it follows that there will be no one who is confused about the distinction between *pramana* and non-*pramana*. In the second case (b), it follows that the ascertaining *pramana* will also require ascertainment as [being] non-deceptive by another, subsequent [*pramana*], and since that [*pramana*] will depend on yet another, there will be an infinite regress.

In the context of examining how one can come to know that a valid cognizer (arising in one's mental continuum) satisfies the definition of valid cognizer, and thus in the context of examining which awareness realizes that a valid cognizer is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' the opponent above sees only two possibilities: either (a) every valid cognizer itself ascertains or realizes that it is newly non-deceptive or (b) one requires a later valid cognizer to realize this. In other words, either (a) the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue, for instance, (besides realizing blue) realizes that it is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive', or (b) one requires another valid cognizer arising after the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue to realize that the first moment of the eye consciousness was newly non-deceptive.

According to the opponent, if (a) every valid cognizer (besides realizing its main object) were to realize that it itself is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' it would absurdly follow that there was no one who was unclear about whether his awareness was a valid cognizer or not. Therefore, one would not have to listen, contemplate, and meditate on the scriptures in order to comprehend valid cognizers.

If (b) one were to require a subsequent valid cognizer to realize that the former valid cognizer was newly non-deceptive, it would absurdly follow that the subsequent valid cognizer also required the realization that it was newly non-deceptive by another subsequent valid cognizer, and since that later valid cognizer would depend on yet another valid cognizer, there would be infinite regress.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*Realizing its own nature by itself, (4)*

*[Realizing] the very pramana through verbal convention.*

[Response by Dharmottara:] It is not the case that all *pramana* (i.e., valid cognizers) are necessarily either [exclusively] ascertained by themselves or [exclusively ascertained] by another [subsequent *pramana*], because there is *pramana* that is ascertained **by itself**, and [*pramana*] that is ascertained by another [subsequent *pramana*]. This is so, because one observes that [some] self-experiencing self-knowing direct perceiver *pramana* (i.e., self-knowing valid cognizers) when **realizing their own nature** induce ascertainment of the factor of non-deceptiveness that is simultaneous and of one substantial entity with themselves; and because one observes that some *pramana* when realizing their object of comprehension require ascertainment as non-deceptive **pramana through pramana** of **verbal convention** that arises later.

Here Gyaltsab Je cites three different interpretations as to the meaning of the two lines from the *Pramanavarttika*: "*Realizing its own nature by itself* / *[Realizing] the very pramana through verbal convention*". These two lines are the response to the opponent's assertion.

The three interpretations are by three different Indian masters of *Pramana*: (a) Dharmottara, (b) Prajnakaragupta, and (c) Devendrabodhi. According to those masters, the two lines present two types of valid cognizer: (1) *self-ascertainment valid cognizer* and (2) *other-ascertainment valid cognizer* — with the first line describing *self-ascertainment*

*valid cognizers* and the second line *other-ascertainment valid cognizers*. However, the three masters differ with regard to how they describe the two types of valid cognizer.

The first interpretation of the two lines is by Dharmottara (*slob dpon chos mchog*).

Dharmottara interprets Dharmakirti's response as follows: Not all valid cognizers are realized to be 'knowers that are newly non-deceptive' either exclusively by themselves or exclusively by another subsequent valid cognizer. This is because there are *some* valid cognizers that are realized to be 'newly non-deceptive' by themselves and *some* that are realized by other subsequent valid cognizers. (Gyaltsab Je's *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation*: "It is not the case that all *pramana* are necessarily either [exclusively] ascertained by themselves or [exclusively ascertained] by another [subsequent *pramana*], because there is *pramana* that is ascertained **by itself**, and [*pramana*] that is ascertained by another [subsequent *pramana*].")

An example of a valid cognizer that is realized to be a 'knower that is newly non-deceptive' by itself is the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue. Yet this does not literally mean that the eye consciousness itself (besides realizing blue) realizes that it is a 'knower that is newly non-deceptive'. Instead, its self-knower — the self-knower perceiving the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue (which is of one nature with the eye consciousness) — realizes this.

The self-knower perceiving the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue ascertains (*i.e.*, realizes) the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue. Not only does it ascertain the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue, it also ascertains that the eye consciousness realizing blue *is* a valid cognizer. Since the self-knower ascertains that the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue *is* a valid cognizer, it ascertains that the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue *is* a 'knower that is newly non-deceptive'; and since the self-knower ascertains that the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue *is* a 'knower that is newly non-deceptive', the self-knower ascertains that the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue *is* non-deceptive with regard to the eye consciousness' *final object of comprehension*, blue. A consciousness' *final object of comprehension* (or literally: "the final entity of an object of comprehension", *gzhal bya'i bdag nyid mthar thug pa*) is explained below.

As mentioned before, a self-knower is a mental consciousness that directly perceives an awareness that is of one substantial entity or one nature with itself. This is because every awareness consists of two parts: one part that is *directed outwards* (*e.g.*, the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue) and apprehends phenomena such as shapes, colors, sounds, etc., while the other part is *directed inwards* (*e.g.*, the self-knower perceiving the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue) and perceives the awareness that is *directed outwards*.

Therefore, when Dharmottara says that some valid cognizers are ascertained to be 'newly non-deceptive' *by themselves* ("there is *pramana* that is ascertained **by itself**"), he does not literally mean that those valid cognizers (besides realizing their main object) also realize that they are 'newly non-deceptive'. Instead he means that those valid cognizers are ascertained to be 'newly non-deceptive' with regard to their *final object of comprehension* by their self-knowers.

In other words, since the self-knowers of some valid cognizers ascertain that those valid cognizers are 'newly non-deceptive' with regard to the valid cognizers' *final objects of comprehension*, Dharmottara says that those valid cognizers are ascertained to be 'newly non-deceptive' *by themselves*. Here the phrase "ascertained by themselves" means *ascertained by their self-knowers which are of one nature with themselves*.

Taking the example of the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue, the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue is ascertained to be 'newly non-deceptive' by itself, because it is ascertained to be 'newly non-deceptive' with regard to the eye consciousness's *final object of comprehension* (blue) by its self-knowing valid cognizer realizing the self-knower's own nature, *i.e.*, the first moment of the eye consciousness

realizing blue. In other words, the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue is ascertained to be 'newly non-deceptive' by itself, because it is ascertained by its self-knowing valid cognizer which besides ascertaining the self-knower's own nature, *i.e.*, the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue, also ascertains that the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue is 'newly non-deceptive' with regard to the eye consciousness's *final object of comprehension*, blue. (Please note that if an awareness is a valid cognizer, its self-knower is necessarily also a valid cognizer — a 'self-knowing valid cognizer').

Thus, the self-knower of the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue ascertains the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue; it ascertains that the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue is a valid cognizer; it ascertains that the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue is a 'knower that is newly non-deceptive'; and it ascertains that the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue is newly non-deceptive with regard to the eye consciousnesses' *final object of comprehension*, blue.

However, not every valid cognizer is ascertained to be newly non-deceptive with regard to its *final object of comprehension* by its self-knower, because not every valid cognizer is newly non-deceptive with regard to its *final object of comprehension*. Not every valid cognizer is newly non-deceptive with regard to its *final object of comprehension* because not every valid cognizer realizes its *final object of comprehension*.

This is because, as mentioned above, there are two types of valid cognizer:

- (1) Self-ascertainment valid cognizer (according to Dharmottara's interpretation, also called 'valid cognizer which induces ascertainment by itself', *rang las nges kyi tshad ma*);
- (2) Other-ascertainment valid cognizer (according to Dharmottara's interpretation, also called 'valid cognizer when ascertainment is induced by another', *gzhan las nges kyi tshad ma*).

An example of an *other-ascertainment valid cognizer* is the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing a radiant color red from afar, with the red color being the color of fire and the eye consciousness arising in the continuum of a person who has doubts whether that color is the color of fire or not.

Another example is the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing a tree from afar, with the tree being a juniper tree and the eye consciousness arising in the continuum of a person who has doubts whether that tree is a juniper tree or not.

The first example, the eye consciousness realizing the radiant color red from afar, is an *other-ascertainment valid cognizer* because, even though it is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' with regard to the color red, it is not non-deceptive with regard to its *final object of comprehension*, the color of fire, and thus with regard to 'the color red *being* the color of fire'. (Please note that 'the color red being the color of fire' is also that eye consciousness' *final object of comprehension*.)

The eye consciousness is non-deceptive with regard to the color red because it realizes the color red. However, it is not non-deceptive with regard to its *final object of comprehension* because it does not realize the color of fire nor that 'the color red *is* the color of fire'. It does not realize the color of fire nor that 'the color red *is* the color of fire' because the person in whose continuum the eye consciousness arises is far away from the fire and thus has doubts whether the color red is the color of fire or not.

The color of fire as well as 'the color red *being* the color of fire' are the *final objects of comprehension* of that eye consciousness because the eye consciousness *has the ability* to realize that the color red is the color of fire and because here the color red (perceived by the eye consciousness) and the color of fire (appearing to the eye consciousness) are equivalent, and equally easily realized. The only reason the eye consciousness does not realize the color of fire, and thus that 'the color red *is* the color of fire', is that the fire is far

away from the observer, resulting in the (observer's) uncertainty as to whether the color red is the color of fire or not.

The first moment of the eye consciousness realizing the color red from afar (with the color red being the color of fire and the eye consciousness arising in the continuum of a person who has doubts whether that color is the color of fire or not) is an *other-ascertainment valid cognizer* because — simply put — it is unable to induce ascertainment of the color of fire through its own power, and therefore of the fact that here, the color red is the color of fire. This means that the eye consciousness is unable to induce, through its own power, a subsequent conceptual consciousness ascertaining the color of fire and that the color red is the color of fire.

Instead, it requires another valid cognizer of *verbal convention* which arises later and is able to induce, through its own power, a subsequent conceptual consciousness ascertaining the color of fire and that the color red is the color of fire. An example of such a valid cognizer of verbal convention is the first moment of an eye consciousness (in the continuum of a person who has moved closer to the fire) realizing the color of fire and thus that the color red here is the color of fire. Since such an eye consciousness realizes its *final object of comprehension* (and is thus a *self-ascertainment valid cognizer*), it is able to induce, through its own power, a subsequent conceptual consciousness ascertaining the color of fire and thus that the color red here is the color of fire.

The later eye consciousness realizing the color of fire is called “a valid cognizer of verbal convention” because it induces a conceptual consciousness that is able to link the color red (appearing to the eye consciousness) with the verbal convention of the color of fire, *i.e.*, it is able to link the red color (appearing to the eye consciousness) with the term “color of fire”.

In other words, the later eye consciousness realizing the color of fire induces a conceptual consciousness which — besides ascertaining the color of fire, and that the color red (appearing to the eye consciousness) is the color of fire — is also able to label that red color with the term “color of fire”.

Please note that *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* are necessarily sense consciousnesses. There are no *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* that are mental consciousnesses. Hence, self-knowing valid cognizers, inferential valid cognizers, yogic direct perceiving valid cognizers, etc. are all *self-ascertainment valid cognizers*.

Examples of *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* are the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing the color of fire, the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue, the first moment of an inferential cognizer realizing that the physical body is impermanent, the first moment of a yogic direct perceiver realizing selflessness, and so forth.

The first moment of an eye consciousness realizing the color of fire is a *self-ascertainment valid cognizer* because — simply put — it itself is able to induce, through its own power, ascertainment of its *final object of comprehension*, the color of fire, and thus of the fact that the red color is the color of fire. This means that it is able to induce, through its own power, a conceptual consciousness ascertaining the color of fire and that the red color is the color of fire.

Likewise, the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue, the first moment of an inferential cognizer realizing that the physical body is impermanent, and the first moment of a yogic direct perceiver realizing selflessness are *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* because they are able to induce, through their own power, ascertainment of their *final objects of comprehension* without relying on another valid cognizer to induce such an ascertainment.

Returning to Dharmottara's interpretation of the *Pramanavarttika*'s two lines, “Realizing its own nature by itself / [Realizing] the very pramana through verbal convention”: even though according to Dharmottara, the two lines expound on the two

types of valid cognizer, Dharmottara holds that the two lines explain the two types of valid cognizers by way of describing the self-knowers of those valid cognizers.

The words of Gyalsab Je's *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* expressing Dharmottara's interpretation of the first line ("*Realizing its own nature by itself*") which presents *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* are: "[some] self-experiencing self-knowing direct perceiver *pramana* (i.e., self-knowing valid cognizers) when **realizing their own nature** induce an ascertainment of the factor of non-deceptiveness that is simultaneous and of one substantial entity with themselves".

The meaning of these words is that some self-knowing valid cognizers, i.e. the self-knowers of *self-ascertainment valid cognizers*, realize their own nature because they realize the *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* that are simultaneous and of one nature with those self-knowers ("[Some] self-experiencing self-knowing direct perceiver *pramana* (i.e., self-knowing valid cognizers) when **realizing their own nature**").

Not only do those self-knowers realize the *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* (that are simultaneous and of one substantial entity with the self-knowers), they also realize the factor of non-deceptiveness of the *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* that is simultaneous and of one substantial entity with the self-knowers. Since the self-knowers realize the factor of non-deceptiveness of the *self-ascertainment valid cognizers*, they realize that the *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* are non-deceptive with regard to their *final objects of comprehension*.

For instance, the self-knower of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing the color of fire ascertains not only the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing the color of fire, it also ascertains the factor of non-deceptiveness of that eye consciousness. Since the self-knower ascertains the factor of non-deceptiveness of the eye consciousness, it ascertains that the first moment of the eye consciousness is non-deceptive with regard to the eye consciousness' *final object of comprehension*, the color of fire (and that the color of the fire is the color of fire).

On the other hand, the self-knowers of *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* do not ascertain that the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* (that are simultaneous and of one substantial entity with the self-knowers) are non-deceptive with regard to the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers' final objects of comprehension*.

The words of Gyalsab Je's *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* expressing Dharmottara's interpretation of the second line ("*[Realizing] the very pramana through verbal convention*") which presents *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* are: "some *pramana* realizing their object of comprehension require ascertainment as non-deceptive **pramana through** a *pramana* of **verbal convention** that arises later".

The meaning of these words is that some valid cognizers, i.e. the self-knowers of *other-ascertainment valid cognizers*, realize their objects of comprehension ("some *pramana* realizing their object of comprehension") but do not realize that the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* (that are simultaneous and of one nature with the self-knowers) are non-deceptive with regard to the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers' final objects of comprehension*.

The self-knowers of *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* realize their objects of comprehension because they realize the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* (that are simultaneous and of one nature with the self-knowers) and that the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* (that are simultaneous and of one nature with the self-knowers) are non-deceptive with regard to the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers' objects of comprehension*.

Furthermore, both the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* (that are simultaneous and of one substantial entity with the self-knowers) and the fact that 'those self-knowers are non-deceptive with regard to their objects of comprehension' are the *final objects of comprehension* of those self-knowers, which is why the self-knowers are *self-ascertainment valid cognizers*.

However, the self-knowers of *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* do not realize that the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* (that are simultaneous and of one nature with the self-knowers) are non-deceptive with regard to the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers'* *final objects of comprehension*. The self-knowers do not realize this because the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* (that are simultaneous and of one nature with the self-knowers) are not non-deceptive with regard to their *final objects of comprehension*. The *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* (that are simultaneous and of one substantial entity with the self-knowers) are not non-deceptive with regard to their final objects of comprehension because they do not realize their *final objects of comprehension*.

As mentioned above, an example of an *other-ascertainment valid cognizer* is the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing a radiant color red from afar, with the red color here being the color of fire and the eye consciousness arising in the continuum of a person who has doubts whether that color is the color of fire or not. The self-knower of that eye consciousness realizes its object of comprehension because it realizes the eye consciousness (that is simultaneous and of one nature with the self-knower) as well as the fact that the eye consciousness is non-deceptive with regard to the eye consciousness' object of comprehension, the color red.

However, the self-knower of that eye consciousness does not realize that the eye consciousness is non-deceptive with regard to its *final object of comprehension* (the color of fire and the fact that the color red here is the color of fire). The self-knower does not realize such because the eye consciousness is not non-deceptive with regard to its *final object of comprehension*. It is not non-deceptive with regard to its final object of comprehension because it is an *other-ascertainment valid cognizer*.

Hence, the person in whose continuum the self-knower of an *other-ascertainment valid cognizer* arises does not know that the color he perceives is actually the color of fire. Therefore, he requires a further self-knowing valid cognizer to ascertain that he perceives the color of fire.

This means that the person who has in his continuum, for instance, a self-knower perceiving the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing the color red from afar (with the red color here being the color of fire and the eye consciousness arising in the continuum of a person who has doubts whether that color is the color of fire or not) requires a later self-knower valid cognizer in order to be able to ascertain that what he is looking at is actually the color of fire. That self-knower valid cognizer is the self-knower of a later eye consciousness newly realizing the color of fire (and arising after the person has moved closer to the fire), and thus it ascertains that the eye consciousness realizing the color of fire is non-deceptive with regard to the eye consciousness' *final object of comprehension* (i.e., the color of fire and that the color red here is the color of fire).

Furthermore, the later self-knower valid cognizer ascertains that the eye consciousness realizing the color of fire (that is simultaneous and of one nature with the self-knower) is non-deceptive with regard to the eye consciousness' final object of comprehension *in dependence on a valid cognizer of verbal convention*. The later self-knower valid cognizer ascertains that the eye consciousness is non-deceptive with regard to its final object of comprehension *in dependence on a valid cognizer of verbal convention* because the later self-knowing valid cognizer ascertains that the eye consciousness is non-deceptive with regard to its final object of comprehension in dependence on the eye consciousness realizing the color of fire and because, as mentioned above, that eye consciousness is a valid cognizer of verbal convention.

Therefore, Gyaltsab Je says in his *Elucidation* that, “some *pramana* require ascertainment as non-deceptive ***pramana through a pramana of verbal convention*** that arises later”.

Here, the phrase “through a *pramana* of verbal convention” means *in dependence on* a valid cognizer of verbal convention. Thus, in short, some *pramana*, i.e., the self-knowers of *other-ascertainment valid cognizers*, require self-knowers of *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* (that arise later and are able to provide further ascertainment) since the self-knowers of *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* are unable to ascertain that the *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* are non-deceptive with regard to those valid cognizers’ *final objects of comprehension*.

For instance, the self-knower of an *other-ascertainment* eye consciousness realizing the radiant color red from afar requires another self-knower (that arises later and is able to provide further ascertainment), because the self-knower of the *other-ascertainment* eye consciousness does not ascertain that the eye consciousness is non-deceptive with regard to the eye consciousness’ *final object of comprehension*.

Hence, the self-knower of the *other-ascertainment* eye consciousness realizing the color red from afar requires the self-knower of a later eye consciousness realizing the color of fire, because it is only the self-knower of the later eye consciousness realizing the color of fire that is able to ascertain that the later eye consciousness is non-deceptive with regard to the eye consciousness’ *final object of comprehension*.

Since the self-knower of the later eye consciousness ascertains this non-deceptiveness *in dependence on* the later eye consciousness realizing the color of fire, which (as explained above) is a valid cognizer of verbal convention, the ascertainment of the eye consciousness being non-deceptive with regard to the eye consciousness’ final object of comprehension takes place *in dependence on or through* a valid cognizer of verbal convention.

This completes the interpretation by Dharmottara.

[Response by Prajnakaragupta:] Alternatively, from the perspective of a knowing consciousness that investigates the ultimate, there is no distinction between *pramana* and *non-pramana* because from the perspective [of that knowing consciousness] one **realizes** that there is only the lack of subject and object being different substantial entities, the non-dual experience experiencing **its own nature by itself**. [Yet even] if from the perspective of that [knowing consciousness investigating the ultimate] there is no [distinction between *pramana* and *non-pramana*], this does not mean it would be unacceptable for there to be such a distinction, because a *pramana* of **verbal convention** that functions without investigating [the ultimate] establishes a distinction between ***pramana*** and *non-pramana*.

[Some] assert that the first passage (“*Realizing its own nature by itself*”) indicates that a self-knower establishes the factor of experiencing its own nature (i.e., it establishes the awareness that is of one nature with the self-knower), and that the latter passage (“[*Realizing*] the very *pramana through verbal convention*”) indicates that a subsequent *pramana* — having the appearance **of the functions [of its object]** — establishes [that the former awareness was] *pramana* with regard to its object of comprehension. [However] these are not the complete definitions of self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment.

The second interpretation of the meaning of the two lines of the *Pramanavarttika* (“*Realizing its own nature by itself* / [*Realizing*] the very *pramana through verbal convention*”) is by the Indian master Prajnakaragupta (*rgyan mkhan po*).

According to Prajnakaragupta, *self-ascertainment valid cognizers*, as described in the first line (“*Realizing its own nature by itself*”), are valid cognizers directly realizing ultimate truths, i.e., emptiness.

Please note that although the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika* is generally taught from the point of view of the Buddhist philosophical system of the Sautrantika (Sutra

School), Prajnakaragupta's explanation is from the point of view of the Chittamatra (Mind-Only School).

Proponents of the Chittamatra School assert that phenomena do not exist externally; they are of one nature or one substantial entity with the mind and appear to it owing to the activation of mental imprints. Therefore, the physical world and its shapes, colours, sounds, and so forth, merely *appear* to an awareness without existing in the manner of external phenomena.

This does not mean that physical phenomena *are* mind, because minds are observers of objects, and if physical phenomena were minds, stones and so forth would absurdly have objects of perception. Rather, just as a dream object is not the dream consciousness that perceives it, nor is it of a different nature or different substantial entity than the dream consciousness, similarly, the physical objects of the world are not the sense consciousnesses that perceive them, nor are they of a different nature than those sense consciousnesses.

The reason why sights, sounds, smells, etc., appear to the mind is that an imprint, previously left on the mental continuum of the person, has been activated and simultaneously produces both the appearance of an object and a cognizing mind – much as in a dream. The cognizing mind in turn leaves a *new* imprint which will be responsible for the appearance of another object and the manifestation of another cognizing mind at some time in the future.

Hence, the reason why we perceive shapes, colours, and so forth, is not because objects exist outside the mind, but because we have left – and continue to leave – countless imprints on our mind-stream: once activated, they are responsible for our different experiences. Only Buddhas have no imprints anymore; they perceive objects the way they are because they have overcome all obstructions and shortcomings of the mind.

The fact that the subject (the mind) and its object are produced simultaneously by one imprint accounts for their being of one substantial entity.

Therefore, according to the Chittamatra School, ultimate truth or emptiness refers to *the lack* of subject and object being different substantial entities (*i.e.*, it refers to subject and object *not* being different substantial entities). In other words, ultimate truth or emptiness refers to the lack of a mind (subject) and its object being different substantial entities. For instance, the lack of an eye consciousness and a table (that is perceived by that eye consciousness) being different substantial entities is an ultimate truth, *i.e.*, emptiness.

A valid cognizer directly realizing ultimate truth, or emptiness, refers to a meditative equipoise that is the product of intensive and prolonged meditation, and which directly realizes the ultimate truth or emptiness of *all* phenomena. It is a non-dual consciousness that is single-pointedly absorbed in ultimate truth, with nothing other than emptiness appearing to it.

Since such a valid cognizer directly realizes the ultimate truth of *all* phenomena, it also realizes its own ultimate nature, *i.e.*, its own ultimate truth. Furthermore, since it is a knowing consciousness that investigates only the ultimate (*i.e.*, it realizes only *the lack* of subject and object being different substantial entities), it is unable to determine whether an awareness is a valid cognizer or not.

This is why Gyaltsab Je says in his *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation*, “from the perspective of a knowing consciousness that investigates the ultimate, there is no distinction between *pramana* and *non-pramana* because, from the perspective [of that knowing consciousness], one **realizes** that there is only the lack of subject and object being different substantial entities, the non-dual experience experiencing **its own nature by itself**.”



According to Prajnakaragupta, valid cognizers directly realizing ultimate truth are *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* because they directly realize their own ultimate nature. As mentioned above, they realize their own ultimate nature because they directly realize the ultimate nature or ultimate truth of *all* phenomena. Hence, Prajnakaragupta asserts that *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* are valid cognizers that realize their own ultimate nature.

However, since *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* realize only ultimate truths, they do not perceive any conventional truths; and since they do not perceive any conventional truths, they are not able to determine whether an awareness is a valid cognizer or not.

But this does not mean that there are no valid cognizers that are able to distinguish between an awareness that is a valid cognizer and an awareness that is not a valid cognizer. There are valid cognizers which can make such distinctions because there are *other-ascertainment valid cognizers*.

According to Prajnakaragupta, *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* — described in the second line (“[Realizing] the very *pramana* through verbal convention”) — refer to conventional valid cognizers. Conventional valid cognizers are awarenesses which are newly non-deceptive with regard to phenomena that are conventional truths (i.e., they newly realize phenomena that are conventional truths).

Examples of *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* are sense direct perceiver valid cognizers, such as the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing a chair, an inferential valid cognizer realizing fire on a smoky mountain pass, a yogic direct perceiver valid cognizer realizing impermanence, and so forth.

In Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation*, the words that express Prajnakaragupta’s interpretation of *other-ascertainment valid cognizers* are, “[Yet even] if from the perspective of that [knowing consciousness investigating the ultimate] there is no [distinction between *pramana* and non-*pramana*], this does not mean it would be unacceptable for there to be such a distinction, because a *pramana* of **verbal convention** that functions without investigating [the ultimate] establishes a distinction between ***pramana*** and non-*pramana*.

In other words, even though a *self-ascertainment valid cognizer* directly realizing emptiness is unable to distinguish between an awareness that is a valid cognizer and an awareness that is not a valid cognizer, this does not mean that such a distinction does not exist. Such a distinction exists because a conventional valid cognizer (i.e., an *other-ascertainment valid cognizer* or valid cognizer of verbal convention) is able to distinguish between the two.

Having presented Prajnakaragupta’s interpretation of the meaning of *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* and *other-ascertainment valid cognizers*, Gyaltsab Je then cites Prajnakaragupta’s refutation of the interpretation of the two types of valid cognizers (and thus of the meaning of the two lines from the *Pramanavarttika*) given by some other scholars:

According to these scholars, *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* — described in the first line (“[Realizing its own nature by itself]”) — refer to the self-knowers of valid cognizers. These self-knowers are *self-ascertainment valid cognizers* because they ascertain that the valid cognizers (which are of one nature with the self-knowers) are awarenesses that apprehend their objects. For instance, the self-knower of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue ascertains that the eye consciousness is an awareness apprehending blue.

*Other-ascertainment valid cognizers* — described in the second line (“[Realizing] the very *pramana* through verbal convention”) — refer to valid cognizers that arise after the earlier self-knowers of valid cognizers and realize that the awarenesses (previously realized by the self-knowers) were *valid cognizers* with regard to their objects of

comprehension. In the case of the self-knower of the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue, subsequent to that self-knower arises another valid cognizer which ascertains that the eye consciousness realizing blue was a valid cognizer with regard to its object of comprehension, blue. This means that unlike the self-knower, the subsequent valid cognizer does not merely ascertain that the eye consciousness was an awareness perceiving blue, it ascertains that the eye consciousness was a *valid cognizer realizing* blue. According to these scholars, that subsequent valid cognizer is an *other-ascertainment valid cognizer*.

However, Prajnakaragupta holds that this explanation is not correct, for it does not correctly define the two types of valid cognizers.

The words of Gyalsab Je's *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* expressing Prajnakaragupta's refutation are, "[Some] assert that the first passage (*"Realizing its own nature by itself"*) indicates that a self-knower establishes the factor of experiencing its own nature (*i.e.*, it establishes the awareness that is of one nature with the self-knower), and that the latter passage (*"[Realizing] the very pramana through verbal convention"*) indicates that a subsequent pramana — **having the appearance of the functions [of its object]** — establishes [that the former awareness was] *pramana* with regard to its object of comprehension. [However] these are not the complete definitions of self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment."

This completes the interpretation by Prajnakaragupta.

Alternatively, one can apply the explanation by Acharya Devendrabodhi: Even though the mere existence of an awareness such as a direct perceiver apprehending blue is **realized by** its **self**-knowing direct perceiver, it follows that there is no certainty as to [that self-knowing direct perceiver] realizing the factor of being *pramana* that is simultaneous with and of one substantial entity with [the self-knowing direct perceiver], because [in some cases] one observes that the **pramana** factor must be realized by a later *pramana* of **verbal convention** — having **the appearance of the functions [of its object]**.

The third interpretation of the meaning of the two lines of the *Pramanavarttika* (*"Realizing its own nature by itself" / [Realizing] the very pramana through verbal convention"*) is by the Indian master Devendrabodhi (*lha dbang blo*).

According to Devendrabodhi, the self-knower of a valid cognizer ascertains that the valid cognizer (that is simultaneous and of one nature with the self-knower) is an awareness apprehending its object. However, it is not certain whether the self-knower also ascertains that the valid cognizer is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive'.

For instance, the self-knower of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue ascertains an eye consciousness apprehending blue. But the self-knower of the first moment of the eye consciousness does not necessarily ascertain that the eye consciousness is a valid cognizer and thus 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive'.

A self-knower is unable to ascertain this when the person in whose continuum the eye consciousness and its self-knower arise holds the wrong view that there are no valid cognizers that are newly non-deceptive with regard to their object. Holding such a wrong view hinders the self-knower from fully ascertaining its object, *i.e.*, it prevents the self-knower from realizing that the eye consciousness is in fact a valid cognizer.

According to Devendrabodhi, a self-knower that is able to ascertain that the valid cognizer (which is simultaneous and of one nature with the self-knower) is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' is a *self-ascertainment valid cognizer* — described in the first line (*"Realizing its own nature by itself"*). Therefore, the self-knower of the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue which ascertains that the first moment of the eye consciousness is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' is asserted to be a *self-ascertainment valid cognizer*.

If a self-knower is unable to ascertain that the valid cognizer (which is simultaneous and of one nature with the self-knower) is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive', a subsequent valid cognizer is needed to ascertain this. Such a subsequent valid cognizer of verbal convention (ascertaining that the valid cognizer previously apprehended by the self-knower was 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive') is an *other-ascertainment valid cognizer* — described in the second line ("[Realizing] the very *pramana* through verbal convention").

This completes the interpretation by Devendrabodhi.

Next follows an extensive examination of the two types of valid cognizers by an opponent:

[Someone:] What are "self-ascertainment" and "other-ascertainment" [valid cognizers]? Of the two, (a) object and (b) consciousness, [self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers]: Either [they] refer to [valid cognizers] inducing or not inducing ascertainment of (a) *an object* through their own power. Or [they refer to valid cognizers] inducing or not inducing ascertainment] of (b) *an object-possessor* (i.e., a consciousness) [through their own power].

Here the opponent examines what self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers refer to. According to him, the two types of valid cognizers pertain either to the ascertainment of (a) *an object* (i.e., an object other than a consciousness), or the ascertainment of (b) *a consciousness* — with consciousness here mainly referring to a *valid cognizer*.

If self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers were to pertain to the ascertainment of (a) *an object*, a self-ascertainment valid cognizer would be an awareness that induces ascertainment of *an object* through its own power, while an other-ascertainment valid cognizer would be an awareness that does not induce ascertainment of *an object* through its own power.

Alternatively, if self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers were to pertain to the ascertainment of (b) *a consciousness* (i.e., a valid cognizer), a self-ascertainment valid cognizer would be an awareness that induces ascertainment of a *valid cognizer* through its own power, while an other-ascertainment valid cognizer would be an awareness that does not induce ascertainment of a *valid cognizer* through its own power.

Please note that an awareness that realizes something also induces ascertainment of that thing through its own power. Such an awareness induces ascertainment of the thing through its own power since it is able to induce a subsequent conceptual consciousness that ascertains or realizes the same thing. For instance, the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing a table induces ascertainment of the table through its own power because, through its own power, it induces a subsequent conceptual consciousness that also realizes the table.

If it were the first (an object), it would follow that the later *pramana* ascertaining [its object] would be a subsequent cognizer. Also, if the earlier *pramana* were not able to induce ascertainment of any of its objects through its own power, it could only be a doubting consciousness. If that were the case, it would not be suitable to be *pramana* because it would not overcome the slightest qualm.

The opponent argues that if self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers were to pertain to the ascertainment of (a) *an object*, "the later *pramana*" (i.e., a self-ascertainment valid cognizer) would be a subsequent cognizer. Furthermore, if "the earlier *pramana*" (i.e., an other-ascertainment valid cognizer) were not able to induce ascertainment of any of its objects through its own power, it would absurdly be a doubting consciousness, because, like a doubting consciousness, it would be unable to overcome the slightest qualm. (Later and earlier *pramana* are explained below.)

The reasoning that leads the opponent to these conclusions is as follows: according to the opponent, if self-ascertainment and other ascertainment valid cognizers were to pertain to the ascertainment of (a) *an object*, a self-ascertainment valid cognizer would be defined as ‘a valid cognizer that induces ascertainment of its object through its own power’, while an other-ascertainment valid cognizer would be defined as ‘a valid cognizer that does not induce ascertainment of its object through its own power’.

If a self-ascertainment valid cognizer were to be defined as ‘a valid cognizer that induces ascertainment of its object through its own power’, it would follow that an other-ascertainment valid cognizer would be a *self-ascertainment* valid cognizer. For instance, the first moment an eye consciousness realizing a radiant color red from afar (with the red color being the color of fire and the valid cognizer arising in the continuum of a person who has doubts whether that color is the color of fire or not) would be a self-ascertainment valid cognizer because it satisfies the opponent’s definition of a self-ascertainment valid cognizer. It satisfies the opponent’s definition of a self-ascertainment valid cognizer because it is ‘a valid cognizer that induces ascertainment of its object through its own power’. The first moment of that eye consciousness realizing a radiant color red is ‘a valid cognizer that induces ascertainment of its object through its own power’ because it is a valid cognizer that induces ascertainment of the radiant color red through its own power.

The opponent then argues that if the first moment the eye consciousness realizing a radiant color red from afar (with the red color being the color of fire and the valid cognizer arising in the continuum of a person who has doubts whether that color is the color of fire or not) were a self-ascertainment valid cognizer, it would be able to induce ascertainment of its *final object of comprehension* through its own power. If the first moment of that eye consciousness were able to induce ascertainment of its final object of comprehension through its own power, it would realize its final object of comprehension, *i.e.*, it would realize that the radiant color red is the color of fire.

If that eye consciousness were to realize that the color red is the color of fire, the later self-ascertainment valid cognizer realizing the color of fire would be a *subsequent cognizer*. The later self-ascertainment valid cognizer would be a subsequent cognizer, because the later self-ascertainment valid cognizer here refers to the first moment of an eye consciousness (in the continuum of the person who has moved closer to the fire) realizing the color of fire and thus that the color red here is the color of fire.

In other words, if the earlier other-ascertainment valid cognizer realizing the radiant color red from afar were able to realize that the red color is the color of fire, the later self-ascertainment valid cognizer realizing the color of fire would be a subsequent cognizer, because that later self-ascertainment valid cognizer has been induced by the earlier other-ascertainment valid cognizer and because the later cognizer realized what had already been realized, *i.e.*, that the color red here is the color of fire.

This is why Gyaltsab Je says in his *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation*, “it would follow that the later *pramana* ascertaining [its object] would be a subsequent cognizer”.

The opponent then argues that since the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing the radiant color red (with the red color being the color of fire and the valid cognizer arising in the continuum of a person who has doubts whether that color is the color of fire or not) is not a self-ascertainment valid cognizer, but an other-ascertainment valid cognizer, it cannot possibly satisfy the opponent’s definition of a self-ascertainment valid cognizer.

If the eye consciousness were not to satisfy the opponent’s definition of a self-ascertainment valid cognizer, it would not induce ascertainment of its object through its own power. If the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing the radiant color red from afar were not able to induce ascertainment of its object through its own power, it would not *realize* any of its objects. If it were not to realize any of its objects, it could only

be a doubting consciousness, for, like a doubting consciousness, it would be unable to overcome any qualms or wrong views with regard to its object. If that eye consciousness were a doubting consciousness, it would not be a valid cognizer, and thus not an other-ascertainment valid cognizer.

Therefore, Gyaltsab Je says in his *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation*, “Also, if the former *pramana* were not able to induce ascertainment of any of its objects through its own power, it would only be a doubting consciousness. If that were the case, it would not be suitable to be *pramana* because it could not overcome the slightest qualm.

This completes the section on the opponent examining self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers pertaining to the ascertainment of (a) *an object*.

Object-possessors are ascertained to be threefold: (1) definition, (2) definiendum, and (3) instance.

The opponent then examines whether the two types of valid cognizers pertain to the ascertainment of (a) *a consciousness, i.e., a valid cognizer*. The way the opponent examines whether self-ascertainment and other ascertainment valid cognizers pertain to the ascertainment of a valid cognizer — an object-possessor — is by investigating that object-possessing valid cognizer from the perspective of the following three aspects: (1) definition, (2) definiendum, and (3) instance.

Here *definition* refers to the definition of a valid cognizer, *definiendum* to the definiendum of ‘a knower that is newly non-deceptive’, and *instance* to an instance of a valid cognizer.

The opponent first examines (3) an instance of a valid cognizer:

It is not plausible to distinguish [between self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers from the point of view of] being able or not being able to ascertain through their own power (3) an instance of *pramana*, such as [the first moment of an eye consciousness] apprehending blue. This is because it is impossible for a consciousness directed outwards, such as [the first moment of an eye consciousness] apprehending blue, to realize itself. Also, [an awareness] is not suitable to be *pramana* if it is not realized by a self-knowing direct perceiver through [that self-knowing direct perceiver’s] own power, which experiences [the *pramana*] just because [the *pramana*] is there.

According to the opponent, if self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers were to pertain to the ascertainment of (a) *a consciousness* — and in this case, to the ascertainment of an instance of a valid cognizer, such as the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue, then a self-ascertainment valid cognizer (taking the example of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue) would refer to ‘a valid cognizer that induces ascertainment through its own power of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue’, and an other-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to ‘a valid cognizer that does not induce ascertainment through its own power of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue’.

Furthermore, the opponent holds that those self-ascertainment or other-ascertainment valid cognizers (that induce or do not induce ascertainment through their own power of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue) could refer to only two kinds of valid cognizer: they would refer either to the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue or to the self-knower of such an eye consciousness.

If the two types of valid cognizers were to refer to the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue, the self-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to ‘the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue that induces ascertainment through its own power of the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue’, while the other-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to ‘the first moment of an eye

consciousness realizing blue that does not induce ascertainment through its own power of the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue’.

In other words, if the two types of valid cognizers were to refer to the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue, the self-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue that realizes itself, and the other-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue that does not realize itself.

However, the opponent argues that an eye consciousness realizing blue that also realizes itself is not plausible, since an eye consciousness is an awareness that is directed outwards (*i.e.*, perceives objects of the external world) and thus could not realize itself.

This is expressed in Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* with the words, “It is not plausible to distinguish [between self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers from the point of view of] being able or not being able to ascertain through their own power (3) an instance of *pramana*, such as [the first moment of an eye consciousness] apprehending blue. This is because it is impossible for a consciousness directed outwards, such as [the first moment of an eye consciousness] apprehending blue, to realize itself.

On the other hand, if the two types of valid cognizers were to refer to the self-knower of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue, the self-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to ‘the *self-knower* of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue that induces ascertainment through its own power of the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue’, while the other-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to ‘the *self-knower* of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue that does not induce ascertainment through its own power of the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue’.

In other words, if the two types of valid cognizers were to refer to the *self-knower* of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue, the self-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to ‘the *self-knower* of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue that ascertains the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue’, while the other-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to ‘the *self-knower* of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue that does not ascertain the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue’.

However, the opponent disputes the existence of a self-knower of the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue that does not ascertain or realize that eye consciousness realizing blue, for he argues that by reason of the fact that the first moment of that eye consciousness is a valid cognizer, it must have a self-knower that realizes the eye consciousness. Otherwise, the opponent argues, the first moment of the eye consciousness realizing blue would not qualify as a valid cognizer.

This is expressed by Gyaltsab Je says when he says, “Also, [an awareness] is not suitable to be *pramana* if it is not realized by a self-knowing direct perceiver through [that self-knowing direct perceiver’s] own power, which experiences [the *pramana*] just because [the *pramana*] is there.”

Then, the opponent examines whether self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers pertain to the ascertainment of (2) *the definiendum* of ‘a knower that is newly non-deceptive’ (with *the definiendum* of ‘a knower that is newly non-deceptive’ referring to *pramana* or *valid cognizer* itself):

Furthermore, it is not reasonable to differentiate [between self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers from the point of view of] ascertaining or not ascertaining through their own power (2) *the definiendum* — the verbal convention of *pramana* — based on an instance. This is because it would follow that inferential [valid] cognizers in the

continuum of children who do not know the verbal convention of *pramana*, or in the continuum Charvakas would not be self-ascertainment [valid cognizers].

According to the opponent, if self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers were to pertain to the ascertainment of (2) *the definiendum* of 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive', a self-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to a valid cognizer that induces ascertainment through its own power of the definiendum of 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive', while an other-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to a valid cognizer that does not induce ascertainment through its own power of the definiendum of 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive'.

In other words, if self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers were to pertain to the ascertainment of (2) *the definiendum* of 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive', a self-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to a valid cognizer that realizes the definiendum of 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive', while an other-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to a valid cognizer that does not realize the definiendum of 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive'.

This would mean that a self-ascertainment valid cognizer would realize the definiendum of 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' *based on an instance of a valid cognizer*, such as the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue. To realize the definiendum of 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' based on the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue means to realize that the first moment of an eye consciousness realizing blue *is* a valid cognizer.

Please note that a person who is able to realize that an instance of a valid cognizer *is* a valid cognizer must know the verbal convention of a valid cognizer, *i.e.*, he must know the term "valid cognizer".

Therefore, according to the opponent, if self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers were to pertain to the ascertainment of (2) *the definiendum* of 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive', a self-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to an awareness that realizes that a particular instance of a valid cognizer *is* a valid cognizer, while an other-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to an awareness that does not realize that a particular instance of a valid cognizer *is* a valid cognizer.

However, the opponent holds that this is not reasonable, which is expressed as follows in Gyaltsab Je's ***Elucidation of the Path to Liberation***: "Furthermore, it is not reasonable to differentiate [between self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers from the point of view of] ascertaining or not ascertaining through their own power (2) the definiendum — the verbal convention of *pramana* — based on an instance".

The reason given by the opponent for holding that this is not reasonable is as follows: if a self-ascertainment valid cognizer were to refer to an awareness that realizes that a particular instance of a valid cognizer *is* a valid cognizer, inferential valid cognizers in the continuum of children who do not know the term "valid cognizer" or in the continuum of followers of the Charvaka School who not accept the existence of inferential cognizers would not be self-ascertainment valid cognizers.

As mentioned before, from a Buddhist point of view, all inferential valid cognizers are self-ascertainment valid cognizers.

Furthermore, inferential valid cognizers arise in the mental continuum of children who do not know the term "valid cognizer" as well as in the continuum of followers of the non-Buddhist Charvaka School who do not assert the existence of inferential cognizers. However, neither those children nor the followers of the Charvaka School are able to ascertain that the inferential valid cognizers in their continuum *are* valid cognizers.

Children who do not know the term “valid cognizer” are unable to realize that their inferential cognizers *are* valid cognizers, because, as mentioned above, one needs to know the term “valid cognizer” in order to realize this.

Followers of the Charvaka School are unable to realize that their inferential cognizers *are* valid cognizers, because they do not accept the existence of inferential valid cognizers.

Therefore, if a self-ascertainment valid cognizer were to refer to an awareness that realizes that a particular instance of a valid cognizer *is* a valid cognizer, the inferential valid cognizers of those children and the followers of the Charvaka School would have to realize that they themselves (*i.e.*, the inferential valid cognizers) *are* valid cognizers. However, since those inferential cognizers are unable to realize this, they would not qualify as self-ascertainment valid cognizers.

This is expressed by Gyaltsab Je in his *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* when he says, “This is because it would follow that inferential [valid] cognizers in the continuum of children who do not know the verbal convention of *pramana*, or in the continuum of Charvakas, would not be self-ascertainment [valid cognizers].”

Lastly, the opponent examines whether self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers pertain to the ascertainment of (1) the definition of a valid cognizer:

Also, if one were to differentiate [between self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers from the point of view of] ascertaining or not ascertaining through one’s own power the (1) definition [of *pramana*] — being non-deceptive — it would follow that inferential [valid] cognizers in the continuum of Charvakas would not be self-ascertainment [valid cognizers] because Charvakas assert that inferential cognizers are deceptive.

According to the opponent, if self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers were to pertain to the ascertainment of (1) *the definition* of a valid cognizer, a self-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to a valid cognizer that induces ascertainment through its own power of the definition of a valid cognizer, while an other-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to a valid cognizer that does not induce ascertainment of the definition of a valid cognizer through its own power.

This means that, if self-ascertainment and other-ascertainment valid cognizers were to pertain to the ascertainment of (1) *the definition* of a valid cognizer, a self-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to a valid cognizer that realizes ‘a knower that is newly non-deceptive’, while an other-ascertainment valid cognizer would refer to a valid cognizer that does not realize ‘a knower that is newly non-deceptive’.

However, the opponent argues that this is not acceptable, because it would follow that inferential valid cognizers in the mental continuum of followers of the Charvaka School would not be self-ascertainment valid cognizers. The inferential valid cognizers of followers of the Charvaka School would not be self-ascertainment valid cognizers because if they were self-ascertainment valid cognizer they would have to realize that they themselves (*i.e.*, the inferential valid cognizers) *are* ‘knowers that are newly non-deceptive’. Yet, the inferential valid cognizers in the continuum of followers of the Charvaka School do not realize that they themselves are ‘knowers that are non-deceptive’ because Charvakas assert that inferential awarenesses are deceptive.

This completes the examination of the two types of valid cognizers by an opponent.

[Response:] There is no fault, because when one examines *pramana* that ascertains that the instances of *pramana* [satisfy] the definition [of *pramana*], [one sees that] it is impossible for *pramana* not to induce ascertainment of [at least] some parts of its objects of comprehension through its own power.

Therefore, if the factor of non-deceptiveness is ascertained through the power of [the self-knower of a *pramana*, that *pramana*] is a self-ascertainment [valid cognizer]; if it is



ascertained through the power of another [self-knower of a later *pramana* the earlier *pramana* is] an other-ascertainment [valid cognizer].

Our own system's response is that there is no fault, since the opponent's arguments do not harm our assertions with regard to the two types of valid cognizers. They do not harm our assertions because when one examines valid cognizers that realize that a particular valid cognizer is 'a knower that is newly non-deceptive' (as is done in this outline), one comes to see that all valid cognizers are able to induce ascertainment of at least some of their objects of comprehension through their own power.

However, this does not mean that all valid cognizers are able to induce ascertainment of their *final objects of comprehension* through their own power, for there are two types of valid cognizers, (1) self-ascertainment valid cognizers and (2) other-ascertainment valid cognizers.

As mentioned before, a self-ascertainment valid cognizer refers to a valid cognizer that realizes its final object of comprehension and thus induces ascertainment of its final object of comprehension through its own power. An other-ascertainment valid cognizer refers to a valid cognizer that does not realize its final object of comprehension and hence does not induce ascertainment of its final object of comprehension through its own power but requires ascertainment by another valid cognizer.

Therefore, as explained by Dharmottara, the self-knower of a self-ascertainment valid cognizer ascertains the valid cognizer's factor of non-deceptiveness with regard to the final object of comprehension of the valid cognizer, while the self-knower of an other-ascertainment valid cognizer does not ascertain the valid cognizer's factor of non-deceptiveness with regard to the final object of comprehension of the valid cognizer. Instead, the self-knower of an other-ascertainment valid cognizer requires another self-knower of a later valid cognizer that ascertains the factor of non-deceptiveness with regard to the final object of comprehension of the later valid cognizer.

This is expressed by Gyaltsab Je when he says, "Therefore, if the factor of non-deceptiveness is ascertained through the power of [the self-knower of a *pramana*, that *pramana*] is a self-ascertainment [valid cognizer]; if it is ascertained through the power of another [self-knower of a later *pramana*, the earlier *pramana* is] an other-ascertainment [valid cognizer]."

The latter passage indicates that among the different interpretations of the two lines from the *Pramanavarttika*, ("Realizing its own nature by itself / [Realizing] the very *pramana* through verbal convention") given by the three masters of *pramana* (Dharmottara, Prajnakaragupta, and Devendrabodhi), our own system accords with the first interpretation given by Dharmottara.

[Someone:] Well, then, it follows that inferential [valid] cognizers are not necessarily self-ascertainment [valid cognizers].

Here an opponent does not understand the meaning of the above-cited words from Gyaltsab Je's *Elucidation* that set forth an other-ascertainment valid cognizer, "if the factor of non-deceptiveness is ascertained through the power of [the self-knower of a *pramana*, that *pramana*] is a self-ascertainment [valid cognizer]."

The opponent thinks these words indicate that whatever is an inferential valid cognizer is not necessarily a self-ascertainment valid cognizer. According to the opponent, for instance, an inferential valid cognizer in the mental continuum of a follower of the Charvaka School realizing the presence of fire on a smoky mountain pass is not a self-ascertainment valid cognizer, because the self-knower of that inferential valid cognizer does not ascertain the factor of non-deceptiveness of the inferential cognizer through its own power. The self-knower does not ascertain the factor of non-deceptiveness through its own power, because it does not realize it. The self-knower does not realize the factor of

non-deceptiveness, because, as explained before, a Charvaka does not assert that an inferential valid cognizer is non-deceptive.

[Response:] There is no fault: the sense of non-deceptiveness of a valid cognizer realizing fire on a smoky mountain pass — in dependence on the reason, ‘smoke’ — in the continuum of a Charvaka is well established, because the valid cognizer induces ascertainment through its own power so that [the Charvaka] is able to obtain the [final] object [of comprehension] just as realized.

Our response is that Gyaltsab Je’s words do not indicate that an inferential cognizer in the mental continuum of a Charvaka is an other-ascertainment valid cognizer just because that inferential cognizer’s self-knower is unable to ascertain the inferential cognizer’s non-deceptiveness.

According to our own system, a Charvaka’s inferential valid cognizer, such as an inferential cognizer realizing fire on a smoky mountain pass (which has arisen in dependence on the correct reason, ‘smoke’), is a self-ascertainment valid cognizer because it is non-deceptive with regard to its final object of comprehension, the fire on the smoky mountain pass.

The inferential cognizer is non-deceptive with regard to its final object of comprehension because it induces ascertainment of the fire on the mountain pass through its own power, enabling the Charvaka to obtain, *i.e.*, to seek out the fire.

[Someone:] If *pramana* and non-*pramana* are distinguished by *pramana* itself or a later arisen [*pramana*], it follows that composing shastras is pointless.

Here an opponent argues it is pointless to compose shastras (such as the *Seven Treatises on Pramana* by Dharmakirti) that present the difference between awarenesses that are valid cognizers and awarenesses that are not valid cognizers, because we already know this difference. We already know the difference because our valid cognizers are able to distinguish between awarenesses that are valid cognizers and those that are not.

The distinction between an awareness that is or is not a valid cognizer is made either in dependence on a valid cognizer’s self-knower (“by *pramana* itself”) or depending on a later valid cognizer (“a later arisen *pramana*”), such as an inferential valid cognizer.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*Shastras counteract bewilderment,*

[Response:] It is not pointless to compose **shastras**, because they are necessary to **counteract bewilderment** with respect to the methods for [attaining] liberation, such as [regarding] the Vedas to be *pramana*, and so forth — it is for that purpose that shastras are composed.

Alternatively, [this line] can be applied to the words of the Omniscient One.

Our own response is that it is not pointless to compose shastras because studying and contemplating them enable a person to overcome his confusion with respect to the methods for attaining liberation or Buddhahood; it enables a person to overcome, for instance, the misperception that the Vedas are *pramana*, etc.

Alternatively the line from the *Pramanavarttika*, “*Shastras counteract bewilderment,*” can be applied to the words of the Omniscient One. In other words, it is not pointless to compose **shastras**, because they are necessary to **counteract bewilderment** with respect to the words of the Buddha, *i.e.*, the sutras. This means that the shastras elaborate on the sutras and studying and contemplating them enables a person to overcome any confusion and misunderstandings with regard to the words of the Buddha.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS

presented in the next term

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*That which elucidates an object is not cognized.*

Merely [being] non-deceptive does not fulfil the definition of *pramana*; there must be **that which elucidates an object not cognized** before, because it is also necessary to speak of a first, or new, cognition as a component of the definition [of *pramana*]. This indicates the characteristic that accords with the etymology of the original term *pramana* of being ‘*firstly* non-deceptive’ or ‘*newly* non-deceptive’.

Some say that both the earlier (‘being non-deceptive’) and this (‘being newly non-deceptive’) are synonymous definitions of *pramana*.

[Response:] This is not feasible because with regard to those two, different generic images arise. [Therefore] the isolates of their definiendums must be different.

[Someone:] The earlier [passage, ‘*Pramana is a non-deceptive consciousness*’] indicates the definition of conventional *pramana* and this [passage, ‘*That which elucidates an object not cognized*’] indicates the definition of ultimate *pramana*.

[Response:] This is also not feasible, for if that were the case it would follow that an ultimate *pramana* is a conventional *pramana* because [an ultimate *pramana*] is a consciousness which is non-deceptive. Also, it would follow that a conventional *pramana* would be an ultimate *pramana* because [a conventional *pramana*] is that which elucidates an object not cognized [before].

[Someone:] The meaning [of the latter passage ‘*That which elucidates an object not cognized*’] is [expressed by the following statement], “It is an ultimate *pramana* because it is that which newly elucidates an ultimate [truth] not cognized [before].”

[Response:] It follows that the earlier passage also indicates ultimate *pramana* because it is permissible to say, “It is *pramana* with regard to the ultimate because it is non-deceptive with regard to the ultimate.”

Likewise since one would have to accept that this [passage ‘*That which elucidates an object not cognized*’] also indicates conventional *pramana*, it is not feasible to separate [the meaning of the two passages].

[Someone:] Well, then, what about **Prajnakaragupta’s explanation to that effect?**

[Response:] He indicates that the **words of the definition** [are applicable] to an instant of an ultimate [pramana], but he does not claim that [the two phrases] have **separate meanings**, because only by indicating the general definition of *pramana* **he is able [to cite an instant of an ultimate pramana]**.

[Someone:] If *pramana* were that which newly elucidates an object, then a subsequent cognizer ascertaining blue would also be *pramana*, because it newly elucidates a generic image.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*After having realized its own nature  
A consciousness of a generic [image] is attained.*

[Response:] There is no fault that it would follow that such a subsequent cognizer would be *pramana*, because **after** a direct perceiver [pramana] has **realized** [the color] blue’s **own** uncommon **nature, a consciousness** apprehending **a generic** [image] **is attained** through the power of that [former direct perceiver *pramana*] — but without that [later consciousness] having the capacity **to determine** its object through its own power.

**The Second Chapter of the *Pramanavarttika***

Alternatively, [someone]

***Second Chapter of the Elucidation of the Path to Liberation, a Detailed Explanation of the Verse Lines of the Pramanavarttika***

**EXPLANATION OF [THIS CHAPTER’S] OBJECTS OF REALIZATION – LIBERATION, OMNISCIENCE AND THE PATHS THAT LEAD THERE**

***I. THE GENERAL MEANING***

**1.1. CITING THE EXPLANATION BY ACHARYA DIGNAGA**

**1.2. THE WAY THE MEANING [OF DIGNAGA’S EXPLANATION] IS ELUCIDATED BY THE AUTHOR OF THE *PRAMANAVARTTIKA***

**1.3. [DIGNAGA AND DHARMAKIRTI’S] VIEW**

***II. THE MEANING OF THE BRANCHES***

**2.1 PROVING THAT THE MUNI IS A VALID COGNIZER**

**2.1.1. SHOWING BY MEANS OF THE FORWARD SYSTEM THE MANNER IN WHICH THE TEACHER ARRIVED [AT HIS GOAL] THROUGH WHAT PATHS**

**2.1.1.1. IDENTIFYING THE INSTANCE OF A *VALID COGNIZER BEING* BY WAY OF EXPLAINING THE MEANING OF THE *ONE WHO HAS BECOME A VALID COGNIZER***

**2.1.1.1.1. THE GENERAL DEFINITION OF A VALID COGNIZER**

**2.1.1.1.1.1. THE NATURE OF THE DEFINITION**

**2.1.1.1.1.1.1. THE DEFINITION**

**2.1.1.1.1.1.1.1. IDENTIFYING *NON-DECEPTIVE***

**2.1.1.1.1.1.1.2. DISPELLING [THE OBJECTION OF] *NON-PERVASION* (*i.e.*, REFUTING THE OBJECTION THAT THE DEFINITION OF A VALID COGNIZER IS TOO NARROW)**

**2.1.1.1.1.1.1.3. DISPELLING [THE VIEW OF A] *BROAD PERVASION* (*i.e.*, REFUTING THE OBJECTION THAT THE DEFINITION IS TOO BROAD)**

**2.1.1.1.1.1.2. THE INSTANCES**

**2.1.1.1.1.1.3. ASCERTAINING THAT THE INSTANCES [SATISFY] THE DEFINITION**

**2.1.1.1.2. THE CHARACTERISTICS**

**2.1.1.1.2. SHOWING THAT THE MUNI ALSO POSSESSES THAT DEFINITION (*i.e.*, THAT THE MUNI IS A *VALID COGNIZER BEING* OR THAT HE POSSESSES *VALID COGNIZERS*)**

**2.1.1.2. IDENTIFYING THE DEFINITION OF A *VALID COGNIZER BEING* BY WAY OF EXPLAINING THE FOUR REMAINING [FACTORS]**

**2.1.1.3. IDENTIFYING THE PATHS THAT LEAD TO [THE STATE OF BEING A *VALID COGNIZER BEING*]**

**2.1.2. SHOWING BY MEANS OF THE REVERSE SYSTEM THE REASON FOR THE BUDDHA HAVING ARRIVED [AT HIS GOAL]**

**2.2 PURPOSE OF PRAISING [THE MUNI] ON ACCOUNT OF [BEING] A *VALID COGNIZER***